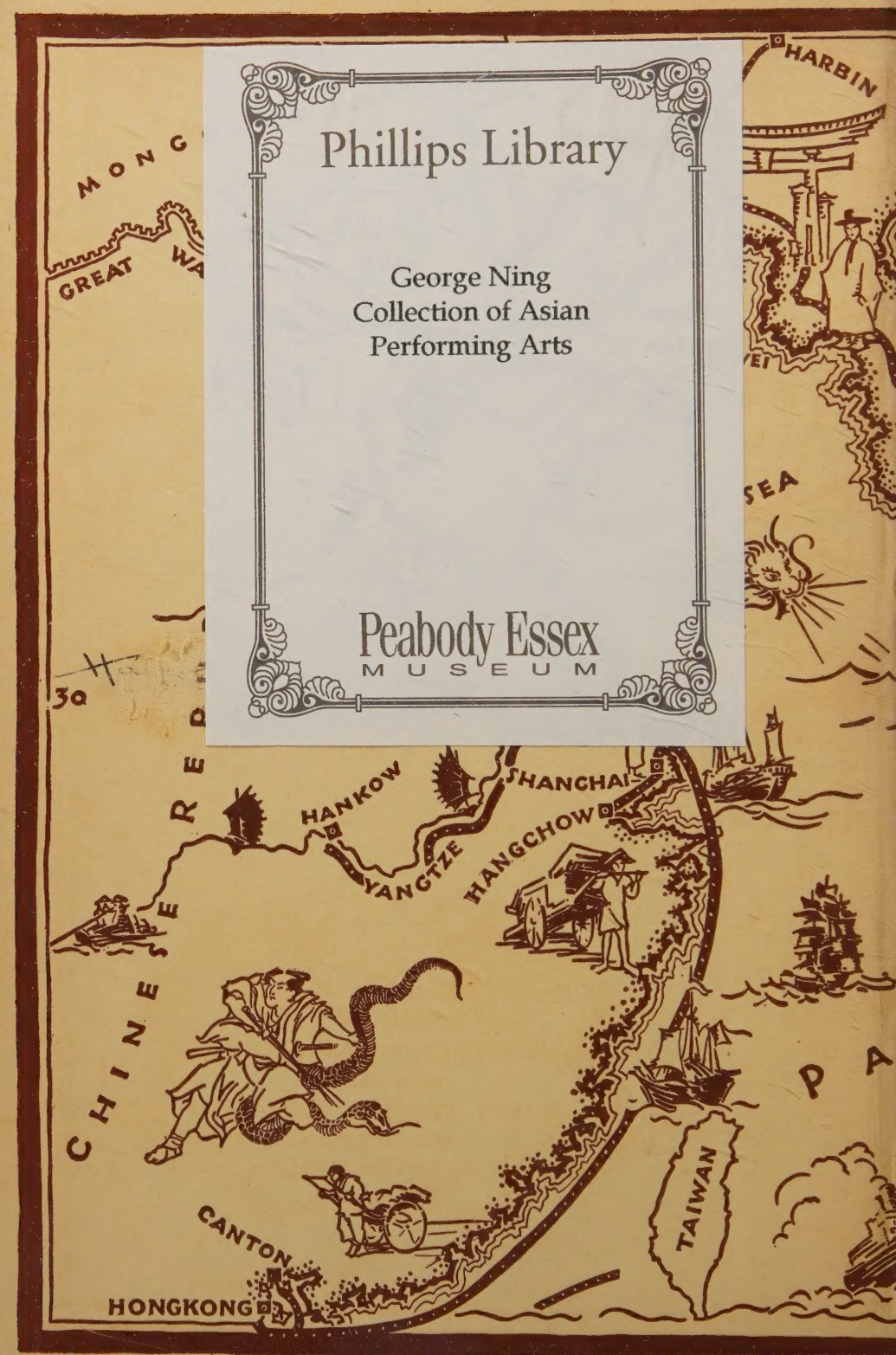
THROUGH ORIENTAL GATES

JAMES SAXON CHILDERS



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THROUGH ORIENTAL GATES

To
Jack and Mabel Barker —
With real love —
From their neighbor
Irving
(Jennie Wilson)

By JAMES SAXON CHILDERS

THROUGH ORIENTAL GATES
THE BOOKSHOP MYSTERY
HILLTOP IN THE RAIN
LAUREL AND STRAW
THE UNEDUCATED POETS
PROSE TALES OF MOTHER GOOSE
ROBERT McALPINE: A BIOGRAPHY

THE AUTHOR

As he was amazingly glorified by a Japanese street artist

THROUGH ORIENTAL GATES

THE ADVENTURES OF AN UNWISE MAN IN THE EAST

BY JAMES SAXON CHILDERS

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TO

BURR BLACKBURN

WHO TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD

WITH ME AND DIDN'T KNOW IT

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I

AND so, Mac, old boy, I'm writing you this letter to have a brag.

You remember that last night in Paris? Remember how Enrico came and stood by our table and played "Ave Maria"—played it as Heifetz plays it? You and I gazed out the window and little Suzette—God love her—frankly cried into her *soufflé glacé aux pistaches.* Remember how that night we vowed, and pledged it in heavenly claret, that some day we'd go round the world together? Then the next morning you left for Cherbourg and the *Aquitania:* I hurried to Calais for the channel boat to Dover and back to Oxford.

That's been four years ago. Last week I chucked everything and decided to see the world. Your answer to my telegram was the only disappointment. I wish you'd let the lumber sell itself while you and I have a *Wanderjahr.*

The sudden rupture was, I suppose, but a culmination of my years of yearning. Exactly what was the immediate reason I don't know. Perhaps I'm going because for three years I've offered my literary idols to sophomores at Birmingham-Southern College—I'm disheartened by their refusal to worship. Perhaps I'm going because for three years I've written a daily column for *The Birmingham News*—I'm tired of dis-

cussing subjects that range from the poems of Homer to the politics of Haiti.

Perhaps I'm going because I've saved five thousand dollars and can afford it. Perhaps—and I'm not sure but this is strongest of all—the spark that actually caused the conflagration was my excited young nephew reading aloud the story of how Blind Pew slipped Bill the black spot, and how later, even as Dirk's whistle was shrilling through the hills, the blind man muffled the tapping of his stick by the roar: "Blarst the boy, why didn't I put out his eyes!" I think that was the immediate incentive.

Yet there's another reason why I'm going: I'm within six months of being thirty years old. It's merely a tick of the eternal clock—I know that—but it's pretty near the border line of adventure; and I refuse to become bare-gummed and quavering without having learned the glories of a vagabond's life.

With that refusal in my heart came the warning from my head that it's now or never; after a few more years the spirit of adventure, I'm afraid, may be dead within me. That's why I'm going now, going while I'm still young enough to ignore the dangers and discomforts of a hard life. I'll vagabond around the world. I'll travel as a sailor. I'll see the world as a deck hand.

I haven't picked a ship yet, but that will be easy. I arrived in San Francisco only this afternoon: already I've been told that there are hundreds of

freighters that sail to the Orient. Every one says it will not be difficult to sign on one of them.

As to where I'm going once I get out there—that information I concede to God alone. I know I'm sailing for Japan. I know nothing more.

It's just too bad, old fellow, that you have to stay at the humdrum of the desk's dead wood while I'm out conquering a couple of worlds or so, while I'm away vagabonding.

Cheerio!

. . .

I thought I'd mailed the letter to you a week ago. To-night I found it in the desk here in my hotel room. . . . Sorry.

I've been in San Francisco ten days. During that time I've walked a hundred miles along the waterfront. I've been on freighters of every nation. I've begged for a job. I've bribed for a job. Once I was offered a place as assistant cook on an old tub going to Australia. But that wouldn't do: I want to go to Japan. The mate of another freighter was willing to take me—I saw bugs in the cabbage. This afternoon I was hired for a trip to Yokohama—exactly what I want—but when I entered the forecastle the smell was simply unholy. I went back on deck and was headed for the ship's ladder when the mate spied me.

"Where the hell are you going?" he called.

"Ashore," I answered.

"Who said you was?"

"I did. I can't live in a place that smells like that fo'cas'le. It stinks in there."

"What the hell did you expect it to smell like—a lady's boodywar?"

Later this afternoon I was looking up at the bow of the *Tenyo Maru,* a trim little Japanese liner, when a wharf rat asked for a cigarette. I inquired about the *Tenyo Maru.* He told me she sails to-morrow noon. Then I asked about getting jobs on freighters. He couldn't understand why I hadn't found a ship. I explained that I had, but that the food had worms in it and the sleeping quarters smelled terrible. He looked at me and his lip curled.

"G'wan, guy," he said. "You don't want no berth on a freighter. You want the number one cabin on the *Graf Zeppelin.* Quit kiddin' yourself."

I wonder, Mac, if I am kiddin' myself. I wonder if already I've passed beyond a willingness to rough it. I wonder if morning chocolate in France, afternoon tea in England, and midnight coffee in America have softened my palate for the strong young wine of adventure. I wonder!

. . .

DEAR DAD: HAVE CHANGED PLANS STOP AM SAILING TENYO MARU FOR YOKOHAMA STOP DECIDED MUCH BETTER GO PASSENGER SHIP

. . .

DEAREST ANNETTE: SAILING JAPANESE LINER TENYO MARU STOP VAGABONDING FIRST CLASS

II

HAWAII—
Honolulu—

We're spending only eight hours here.

This morning I went bathing at the beach of Waikiki.

This afternoon I went for a drive, then saw some native dancing.

Honolulu makes a good act with steel guitars, hula girls, paper volcanoes, and a backdrop of palm trees, but in reality it's just another American city.

The shops in the business district are American. The goods offered are mostly American. The advertisements are the same as those in Los Angeles, Detroit and Albany. Out near the beach at Waikiki is a Piggly Wiggly, and, regardless of how much they disguise it as a coconut tree, a waterfall, or what you will, it's a Piggly Wiggly just the same.

At 4:30 we sail for Japan.

III

THIS morning, Dad, in a little side street I saw a great bull, with a ring through his nose and straw-rope sandals about his feet, dragging a cart upon which sat five wooden buckets filled with nightsoil gathered on the morning round of the filth collector. Beside the bull strained his brother in toil, the Japanese coolie; sweating and wheezing as he struggled between the shafts of his little wagon, vapid eyes staring with the beastlike stupidity evolved within his brain through generations of laborers that have served as human horses. Then a taxi, a Ford of last year's model, came up behind them and blew for passage. Slowly the bull and the coolie drew to one side. The taxi passed.

And that's a perfect indication of how Japan has impressed me. If the figure seems a trifle too pat, a trifle too much like the Rev. Warkins swaying his congregation by the mumbo-jumbo of his eloquent comparisons, I'm sorry and I humble myself. Yet that's my figure. The bull, the coolie and the Ford, rump to fender, symbolize the Japan I've seen—the Japan that's so confused and so confusing.

The bull I expected, though mercifully I'd not been told of his haulage, and the coolie I knew about; but

the presence of the Ford upset me—as it has upset the Japanese.

I came to Japan with romantic ideas about Fujiyama and pretty girls in silken kimonos thrusting pointed forefingers up and down while crossing a New York, Chicago or Kansas City stage, crossing as the piccolos shrilled a quick melody and the violins plucked *pizzicato*. Such ideas, of course, are absurd. Japan is a great modern nation, as are the United States, England and France, with battleships lurking off its shores, with social injustice, political graft and trained publicity agents busily writing about cherry blossoms.

Old residents, American and English men and women who've lived in Japan for decades, declare the contradictions in social and daily life have been brought about chiefly by the introduction of Western machines and Western manners into an Oriental country and among an Oriental people. They say the social change began more than half a century ago. But they add that the startling confusion of the present can be definitely dated from 1923.

For 1923 was the year of the most horrible of all Japanese earthquakes. It was that ghastly happening which literally shook Japan from the lethargy of her ancient ways. Men and women repeatedly say, "Before the earthquake," as Germans and Frenchmen say, "Before the War."

The September morning was hot. At three minutes to twelve all was peaceful and normal. At two minutes to twelve great buildings swayed like young trees

in a gale. By twelve o'clock entire cities had been obliterated.

But the fire was more terrible than the quake itself. For three days and three nights Tokyo and Yokohama burned, until three-fourths of Tokyo was destroyed and Yokohama was no more.

Thousands of men and women plunged into the harbor of Yokohama to escape the flames; then the oil tanks exploded and covered the face of the water with an unbroken burning. As those who had dived below the surface came up for air, they sucked only flames into their lungs.

In Tokyo thirty-two thousand persons were herded into an open space of eight acres. They carried their bedding with them. Once they were packed so none could move, the wind shifted and brought sparks from the holocaust across the city. The sparks fell upon the bedding and soon there was a great oven, the shrieks of tortured throats mingled with the roar of the flames. The conservative estimate declared one hundred and fifty thousand met their deaths from the flames and from the falling timber and stones.

Afterward came the period of sickness and starvation. No one was allowed to come into Tokyo and the great city lay isolated in its misery. The lack of food eventually became so great that men leapt into the moat surrounding the imperial palace and there caught fish and ate them raw.

The earthquake of 1923 tended to broaden the breach already existing between Japanese progressives,

who ape the West, and the conservatives, who combat even a slight deviation from the traditions of the Orient. As the breach widened, as international difference became more apparent, the worshipers of the past were forced to admit a national desire for what America and England could teach in science, in construction, in sanitation, in all that is physical, tangible. But once the old guard had that admission tortured from it, in bitterness it redoubled its insistence upon preservation of ancient precept and practice. The extreme confusion of modern Japanese life has resulted from the attempt to walk at the same time both the traditional highway of the forefathers and the asphalt roads of America.

As to when will be found some middle path, some path suited in peculiar fashion to Japanese feet—that's the riddle. Indeed, some say that Western machinalism can never be grafted upon the ideals of primitive Japan. That may be true, though there's no question that Japan is becoming outwardly Westernized as fast as it can learn to wear our clothes, build steel and concrete office buildings, construct battle cruisers and compete in international markets through mass production.

There are a thousand things about Japan that I want to tell you, but I can't now. I must change. This afternoon I'm playing tennis at the club of a young Japanese I met on the *Tenyo Maru* coming over. To-night we're dining together and afterward going to a geisha party. I'll finish this letter later.

Later—much later.

Quelle nuit! Quelle nuit! In fact, what a night! I've just come back from a geisha party. The more I see of geisha girls, the more I realize they're the perfect arrangement for tired business men.

I learned something else to-night, though the moon had begun his descent before the knowledge crept through my veins. The little hours had come when I realized that *sake* wine has a most pleasing potency. To defy its velvet insistence is to be Ajax daring the thunder.

Sake is the national strong drink of Japan. It is wine made from rice. In color it's pale yellow, looking somewhat like hock. It's warmed before being poured and the first taste is rather insipid. Then comes a slight sweetish tang. One thinks of cheap Sauterne. One thinks of Barsac. Then one doesn't think. As a little babe one floats on a lonely, slow-drifting cloud.

I feel very pleased with myself to-night. One reason, undoubtedly, is the sake; the other is that I beat a geisha playing *jankempo*—jankempo is the Japanese name for "paper, scissors and stones": scissors cut paper, paper covers stones, stones dull scissors.

The geisha are marvels at the game and little Miss Summer-Rose-in-Full-Bloom, who allowed me to defeat her after dinner this evening, was, I'm sure, merely giving proof of the professional cunning so abundantly possessed by these women. But I loved it—and when my last scissors cut her paper we all shouted our laughter and Miss Summer-Rose-in-Full-Bloom wiggled her

finger and blew me a compliment in swift Japanese. I bowed and assured her I'd never before seen a summer rose so beautiful, or possessed of a fragrance so rare.

So we world travelers study anthropology, with particular emphasis upon ethography in its feminine aspects. . . .

And Scheherazade perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say. Such a tiptoe arrival of dawn impresses me, impresses me mightily, with the strange and wondrous fashion this sake its miracles doth perform—or words to that effect. Some day I shall attempt a pæan in its honor. I'll call it "Down to the Shea in Sips"—or is that right?

IV

A JAPANESE geisha is a strange and baffling fusion of the New York cabaret girl and the woman grossly sold in the slave markets of the Orient.

A female child of Japan after she reaches the age of nine is liable to be sold or leased into an amazing traffic. The parents may, by formal contract, relinquish all rights to their daughter and give her, body and soul, to a geisha master, who agrees to educate, train and guide the girl in her bizarre career.

When a father decides to sell his child he approaches the owner of a geisha house. After the essential Oriental formalities and delay, the little girl is exhibited. Her charms and potential developments are estimated. Then begins the inevitable haggling. Perhaps the sale cannot be consummated where the daughter first is shown. She is, thereupon, peddled by her father until he finds a geisha master willing to pay the price demanded, or until he ascertains that his child in open market will not fetch the money he desires. If the original price is not met the father then offers his daughter for a lower sum. The average amount paid for healthy and comely girls is between six hundred and one thousand yen (three hundred and five hundred dollars), though especially fine children have

been known to sell for as high as two thousand yen (one thousand dollars).

Immediately after the contract is signed and the money paid, the girl enters the home of the geisha master. There she lives with other girls and with women engaged in the profession for which she is to be trained.

A geisha is an entertainer. At a few annual celebrations she sings and dances in public, though usually her work is private. A lonely gentleman desiring a companion arranges for a geisha to dine with him, to pour his wine, and afterward, if he likes, to play and sing for him. Two or three friends who want gay company for the evening employ geisha to go with them to the restaurant or the tea house; there the girls tell the latest jokes, play jolly parlor games, sing and dance. At banquets geisha almost invariably are present. They come in during the latter part of the evening to entertain the guests.

Such services in Japan require a full knowledge of involved etiquette, a facility in polite speech, a mastery of the *samisen,* the national musical instrument, a memory of numberless songs, and a marked grace as a dancer. All these arts are taught each child who comes to live in the geisha house.

More important, probably, than progressive education, the little girl learns to cultivate whatever physical attraction is hers, to develop to its fullest her particular powers of feminine allurement.

After two or three years of rigid schooling the novi-

tiate becomes a *hangiokn*—a half-price girl. At banquets and large entertainments she is sometimes allowed to dance, though more often she serves as the player of the little drum, the *tsudzumi,* which joins its curious sound with the samisen to make up the geisha orchestra. As a hangiokn she is given a name, "Butterfly," perhaps, or "Twinkling Star," a name of poetic qualities, yet one not suggestive of the charm that will be hers after she is recognized as full geisha.

From her twelfth through her seventeenth or eighteenth year the life of Butterfly and her tiny sisters is one of discipline. Each day she practices upon the samisen, a three-string cross between the banjo and the guitar. Each day, through weary hours, she dances. Then she plays at games and practices the service at banquets and entertainments. Her mirror is ever busy, because the child must become a mistress of dress and of apparently spontaneous gayety. She converses with her teacher to learn the art of repartee. She taps weird rhythms upon the tsudzumi. Exceptional in its variety and pitiless in its severity is the training of little Butterfly.

In singing, her voice is flexible, but, since she is very young, it lacks strength. Some masters hasten the deepening of the tone. In midwinter they send the child to the roof of the house. There, lightly clad, she plays for hours upon the samisen, plays until the blood, like tiny rose petals upon a bed of lilies, drips from her fingers upon the snow. There she sings her little songs to the unresponsive heavens. And

from there she is carried below—the hoarse whisper which thanks her bearers is the assurance of a merciless cold, is assurance of the eventual strengthening of her voice.

After the half-price girl reaches eighteen and has become proficient in the arts required of her, she is eligible for recognition as full geisha. But before that strange accolade can be conferred there must be money—much money.

At the time the child was bought, the geisha master paid a considerable sum to acquire his rights of ownership. During eight, nine, ten years he has fed, clothed, housed and elaborately educated a girl who, to him, has never been more than a simple business investment. Before he permits the hangiokn to become a geisha he requires the first big return upon his expenditures.

The family that sold the child was poor, else the sale had never been made; because Japanese fathers and mothers love their children quite as much as do parents of Indiana or Devonshire. The family, then, cannot make the payment. But the money must be paid.

Occasionally, though very rarely, the girl is able to borrow money from a friend who requires nothing in exchange. The usual method is the ageless one, and, despite Japanese bitterness in attempting to hide the facts, the hangiokn is sold to some wealthy man. Arrangements for the sale are made with the geisha master, who through the years has carefully guarded the child's virtue. By the terms of the formal con-

tract she agrees to serve her buyer intimately, and to serve him alone, for one year. In turn, he agrees that she may continue her public and private singing, dancing and playing of the samisen. The sale price varies with the charm of the girl and the ability of the man to pay, the average price being in the neighborhood of one thousand yen (five hundred dollars), though the sum has been known to reach ten times that amount.

After the hangiokn has been raised to the full rank of geisha she is ready for her official début. She and her master, both arrayed in formal dress, in gorgeous costumes bought by the girl's lover, set out upon the pilgrimage of the geisha. These two, the man and his enticing property, make the rounds of the tea houses and restaurants. Always they present gifts, little cups or painted fans or embroidered towels, and always the girl is introduced. But not as Butterfly, not as Twinkling Star. Now she has a new name, a name worthy of her more resplendent and prominent position. Now, perhaps, she is "Miss Cherry-blossom" or "Miss Summer-Rose-in-Full-Bloom."

After their formal calls at the restaurants and tea houses, Cherry-blossom and her master return to their strange home. She is a geisha. She has joined the seventy-six thousand girls whose business last year paid the Japanese Government in official taxation almost three million yen.

When next she goes out as an entertainer she goes in the splendor of her new position. Her gay talk

GEISHA

Miss Summer-Rose-in-Full-Bloom is playing upon the koto. Miss Cherry-blossom is singing one of her little songs.

and singing and dancing have taken a new evaluation; for an hour's entertainment she may be paid as high as one yen fifty sen (seventy-five cents). This money is turned over to the master, who divides it by taking seven parts and giving the geisha three. If she is a particularly successful entertainer, the ratio may be altered to six to four. The money she receives she may use as she likes—for luxuries, amusements, or, as often happens, as gifts for her parents.

The geisha of rare abilities quickly builds up a clientèle and is in constant demand. In one evening she may be desired by more than one friend, or be asked to entertain more than one gathering. That conflict brings into the story a curious institution.

The *kenban* is the central office in each town. There the names of the geisha are listed. A gentleman desiring a particular girl notifies the owner of a restaurant or tea house. This owner telephones the kenban. He is informed that the geisha is already out, but he is asked to wait until certain investigations can be made.

The central office then telephones the tea house or restaurant where the desired geisha is entertaining. She is told she is wanted elsewhere. She reports this information to the man with whom she has been dining. If he wishes her to remain, it is understood she will be paid double price. If he excuses her, she leaves immediately, and receives pay for a full hour even though she has been present only a few minutes.

A second call to the same girl carries with it the understanding that the double price will be doubled;

a third, and the double of the double will be added to itself. This system might easily admit of abuse were it not that the kenban so operates that no false calls can be entered. It was to abolish the fabricated call that the kenban was established in each city.

The fact that a girl frequently is desired by more than one person intimates the possible expense of geisha entertainment. Two gentlemen out for pleasure usually call three girls, for, after dinner, one plays the samisen, one the tsudzumi and one dances. During the evening their fee may be doubled or quadrupled. The restaurant owner adds numberless extras. A conservative evening of a little wine, a little singing and two perfectly innocent hours with the geisha will bring a bill of fifty yen (twenty-five dollars). Foreign residents in the East declare geisha to be the most expensive entertainment of the Orient.

As Cherry-blossom grows older she begins to trouble about the years ahead, because for the geisha there is no future. Always over her shoulder she sees the distressing figure of old age.

When she was sold as a little child, Cherry-blossom was told that she was to serve for twenty, twenty-five, thirty years; perhaps for life. During her residence in the geisha house she has seen too often the plucking of the fingers of time. And so, while youthful beauty is still upon her, she ever seeks The Man.

The fate ceaselessly prayed for by Cherry-blossom is that some man, kind and wealthy, will bargain with her master, pay the sum demanded and so end her

contract. The most glorious of dreams is that the man should take her as legal wife. And she has grounds for such hopes. Such unions are not unknown. Even members of the Japanese nobility have married geisha.

But if Cherry-blossom cannot win a husband, if no one will buy her outright, then she yearns for a *dannsan,* a lover, who each spring, summer and New Year, will give her a full dress of the season. And she hopes —secretly she prays at the little shrine where she worships—that after ten years her dannsan will pay the sum required by her master, a sum which yearly has become less, and so enable her to leave the geisha house and serve only him who has been kind to her. Or perhaps the dannsan might purchase a little tea house and give it to the woman who has furnished him with casual amusement. That, too, would cause Cherry-blossom to offer many thanksgivings to the generous gods.

Because Cherry-blossom knows that when her contract expires, there is nothing. Her master will probably release her. And then what?

During the years of her service she has not been officially recognized as a woman of professional impurity. She has not been branded prostitute. Through all her years of service she may—it is possible—have remained an actual virgin. She may have known the one lover who bought her, and have known no other. She may—but men say differently. They whisper that usually the geisha has her price; which, they say, is

only a little above the fee charged in houses of legalized immorality.

Perhaps, after the spring of her life has passed, when men no longer send for her, when she's no longer wanted at banquets, and the double of the double is hers no more; then, perhaps, Cherry-blossom may openly walk through the ever-gaping door. But if she's fortunate, very fortunate, she may possibly persuade her master to allow her to remain in his house, there to fondle her memories and to act as serving maid to little girls freshly bought.

V

THERE is one thing, Annette, of which I'm sure. I've found the type of house in which we're not going to live. We might build an English manor house, we might—though God forbid—sink to one of those Spanish horrors, we might construct another of those "show places" which litter the new and more wealthy residential sections of America; but I swear we'll never live in a house built Japanese fashion.

Not that their fragile little houses aren't attractive; they are, and they'd make admirable dwellings for the Liliputians, but they cramp a tall American. The frequent earthquakes—the daily average in Japan is five; some of them are detected only by scientific instruments, many are felt—cause the natives to build their houses low. The room ceilings often aren't six feet high.

In the construction of a house, workmen first clear the ground and build a foundation of pillars. While this is being done, the carpenter, "The Great Artificer," the most exalted of all artisans, is at work upon the roof. After the roof is built, the walls of laths or slender bamboo are erected and the roof is hoisted to the top, where it is covered with temporary matting. The Great Artificer then rests his tools. He must delay until the priest arrives to thrust his meddling

nose into yet another bowl of porridge which doesn't belong to him.

These ecclesiastic parasites in characteristic manner issue orders and edicts which have no possible reason save that such bulls afford them the ubiquitous graft of voodooism. They declare that for reasons theologic certain windows have to be placed in certain positions. They announce that it is the will of the Eternal Spirit that a room be constructed to particular dimensions. They proclaim that the One and Everlasting has momentarily ceased ordering the way of the spheres for the purpose of directing the building of a Japanese house, and that as a result of His cogitations He has decided the main door shall be placed four feet to the left of where the carpenter had planned.

The result of this theocratic bullying is that the priest fulfills the tradition of his brotherhood and departs with a pocket lined with canonical thieving, that the carpenter has a difficult time carrying out his job, and that the owner may receive a house quite different from the one he wanted. I've had American and English residents relate the near impossibility of getting houses exactly as desired—unless the priest is seen in private and his divinations assisted by having his waistline tightened with bowls of rice and his wallet crowded with silver.

After the priest has worked his graft, the carpenter is allowed to get on with his job. He covers the walls with clay or plaster and he hurries the building of the

doors, all of which are of the sliding variety and most of which fit so poorly they rattle to any casual breeze. The outer doors are of wood—they're called *amado,* "rain doors"; those on the inside are the famous *shoji,* the doors made of translucent paper.

And I vow, Annette, the shoji are not satisfactory to one of my modesty. Whenever one wishes to see into the next room—it's as true at a public inn as at a private house—one has only to wet his finger, place it against the paper and create a peep-hole. Besides this bath-in-a-glass-house state of affairs, the paper is forever being snagged and torn. One of the most common tasks of the housemaid, especially in homes where there are children, is to go about with a bowl of rice paste, brushes, shears and a roll of fresh paper, mending holes in doors and walls. There's a jolly little saying that "The child who never pokes holes in the shoji will grow up a fool."

The floor of every room is covered with straw mats. They're clean and soft and springy.

In a Japanese house the parlor is the principal room. It's always especially tidy, which means it's neat beyond the dream of an American housewife. At one side is a small alcove, two yards wide and one yard deep. There is placed a scroll, or a picture, or a vase holding a single flower. Perhaps the branch of a dwarf tree is put there in an unobtrusive container. Every few days the picture or flower is changed. I love it. There is no other decoration in the room.

Only the one blossom, or the one painting or a delicate scroll—a poem, perhaps.

Chin on hand by the candle we lay at dawn
Chanting songs of sadness, till the tears had splashed
Our cup of new-made wine.

It's so much more restful than our American and English smothering of visitors in rooms containing the paintings of Rembrandt in frames from Florence, the poems of Ella Wheeler Wilcox in jeweled bindings, Chippendale chairs standing upon Persian rugs and the Farnese bull charging toward a French clock. When I think of the mad confusion in my own library I want superlatives to praise this Oriental homage to unconflicting beauty.

Yet the parlor is not a thing of beauty only. It, as well as any other room in the house, can be changed to a bedroom. This is done by placing one or two *futon* (comfortables) upon the soft mats. During the day the futon are rolled up and stored in small cabinets.

The kitchen, with its earthen floor, usually is at the rear of the house. Beside it stands the tiny bathroom. . . .

I should like to write you more, but, instead, I must write in my journal. For ten days I've not touched it. I now know I shall never uncrown the glorious little Pepys or the fragile Marie Bashkirtseff.

Love, *chérie,* or as the Japanese say: "To my most dear one in the far country I weave flower thoughts."

It's ghoulish to enter a Japanese bank. There is no clatter of typewriter nor whir of adding machine. There is no indication of "big business" or sign of "efficiency."

The banker of Japan performs all calculations upon the *soroban,* the counting board, a wooden frame crossed with iron rods upon which small circles of wood or ivory can be moved up or down. Rube Goldberg, alone, could explain how it works. Yet the Japanese schoolboy can reckon sums with a speed in excess of Western pencil and paper.

Yesterday morning I went into a Tokyo bank and presented a letter of credit. All clerks put down the books they were reading and clustered round to inspect the document. For six or seven minutes they studied it, periodically looking up to peer at me. After they decided to grant my request, they filled out eight different papers. I was asked to sign each. Each clerk examined my signature. I was then presented with an oblong slab of wood upon which Japanese characters were painted, it being, I was told, my identification tag. Why I needed one I still don't know, for during the half hour I was in the place only one other person entered.

The first group of clerks bowed me farther along the counter. At my second stop I presented my identification slab, though the clerks who had given it were only six feet away. I was told there would be a slight delay because the money would have to be brought

from the vault. After several minutes it appeared and the counting began. The bills passed through twelve different pairs of hands. Finally they arrived at the desk of the teller serving me. With great care he counted the money nine times. Then he pushed the bills toward me. At the same time he presented a moist sponge that I might dampen my fingers the more easily to check his count and the count of the twelve other clerks. As I left, every one in the room stood and bowed.

I had been in the place more than half an hour. In any bank of America the transaction would have been completed in five minutes.

. . .

This evening the friendship between Japan and my own country was further cemented by two gentlemen from the University of Michigan. These good-will ambassadors reeled about the lobby of the hotel. Their determined voices challenged the world.

"Specially Japs. They can't fight. Too little. And they're yellow."

. . .

One of the greatest additions to beauty, as the Japanese understand it, is an abundance of gold teeth.

A dentist who has studied in America told me that the teeth of the Japanese are not of the best, but that often men and women have edges of perfectly good front teeth chipped off and gold placed there. He

declared that a gold crown could be bought for as little as two dollars and fifty cents and that three times that amount was considered an outrageous charge.

To Western eyes the charm of many a Nipponese maiden is decidedly marred by the bullion flash once her lips are parted. This is particularly true since they believe one gold tooth calls for another, until all are jaundiced.

Last week I saw a girl with the edges of her front teeth rimmed with gold, while in each of the front uppers was embedded a tiny heart of green jade. Her smile rather staggered me. I felt as if I'd suddenly peered into the throat of the rainbow.

. . .

Among the many lessons the Japanese could teach the West is a sensible manner of greeting. In Japan the unpleasant practice of handshaking is unknown. "How do you do" is expressed by a bow.

Rather it's expressed by a series of bows. In a Japanese business office I saw the president greet a visitor. The president bowed and the visitor bowed. Then they did it again. And again. And again. Nine times! I counted them. . . . I recalled certain signs over desks and beneath glass table-tops—"This is our busy day"; "Do it now"; "Step on the gas."

The difference in private homes is still more marked. In the Occident the visitor remains standing until he's invited to be seated. In Japan he squats at the entrance of the room until the host, who is sitting upon

his feet and legs on a cushion upon the floor, invites his guest to enter. The guest, without rising from his squat, advances with surprising swiftness, then folds his feet beneath himself. It is at this time the bowing begins. Both bend forward until their foreheads touch the mats before them. Then they sit erect, smile at each other, and down they go again, forehead to mat. This continues and continues until both host and guest are certain they have expressed full respect. They then sit erect, flip open their fans and cool themselves.

The Japanese custom has its disadvantages. Lovers of Nippon, that is, lovers of the old school who have not learned Western ways, know nothing of an embrace or a kiss. Obviously it is impossible for two persons sitting with their feet and legs folded beneath them to kiss each other. So Japanese lovers get their thrill by sitting back to back.

On the street men and women do not kneel in the mud when bowing to each other, though assuredly they go as low as possible without toppling over. The upper-class man bows from the hip. The middle-class man and all women place their hands upon their thighs and do a semi-bow, semi-squat, sliding their hands to their knees as they go down.

When a Westerner begins the practice of bowing he feels embarrassed. In my first effort I didn't judge my distance properly and bumped heads with a girl in a tea house. In my second I rudely allowed an

elderly lady to start her bow a fraction of a second before I could bend. But now I get on all right—though I've made my limit six bows. After coming up from that number I concede the final curtsy.

VI

"THIS afternoon," said the lady who was entertaining me in Tokyo, "this afternoon," she repeated, "we go to see some more temples and some more shrines and we—"

"Madam," I interrupted, my voice suggesting the ennui of experience and the excitement of anticipation, "this afternoon I go to see Dairen play Tokyo for the championship of all Japan."

"But you haven't seen the bronze Buddha where—"

"And I haven't seen the Dairen pitcher. I understand, madam, his fast ball is mindful of Dazzy Vance on a dark day."

"Do you mean," and her manner was haughty while her voice was laden with scorn, "that you would forgo visiting the temples for the supposed pleasure of witnessing a baseball game?"

I blushed my shame, and then, "Madam," I admitted, "ecclesiastic edifices hold no interest when there is the possibility of hearing the sweet smack of willow on horsehide."

"I suppose you will return for dinner," my hostess tossed at me as I left the dining room.

"Undoubtedly," I replied.

And so, momentarily, I was released from the treadmill of the temples, from viewing enormous iron and

wooden gentlemen with monumental bellies and misplaced eyes who juggle thunderbolts and cut off heads with a strangely disconcerting *éclat*. I was free to go to the ball game.

I can speak no Japanese, nor can I read it. Yet as I approached the great concrete stadium in Tokyo and saw men fighting ten deep at each entrance, as I noticed that all ticket windows were closed, I deduced correctly that the sign in Japanese characters announced an S. R. O. That fact caused worry. The championship of all Japan was being played on the other side of a concrete wall. I, apparently, was fated only to wander about, listen to the roars of the more fortunate ones, and murmur graphic phrases. Then, suddenly, some god was kind and the inspiration came.

For years I have written for newspapers in the South. For years I have been a friend of John D. Martin, president of the Southern Association of Baseball Clubs. My occupation and my friendship annually bring me a bit of cardboard on which is printed: "Southern Association of Baseball Clubs. Admit bearer to All Games Where Pass of League President is Valid. John D. Martin, President."

It had admitted me to games in Birmingham, New Orleans, Atlanta, Nashville. I saw no reason why it shouldn't be good in Tokyo—especially for the championship game of Japan. Therefore I sought until I found a particularly humble-looking gate attendant. To him I presented myself, my pass held casually in the left hand.

"Baseball," I said, without smiling.

He looked at me, then at the pass. "Baseball," he repeated.

"Certainly, baseball," and I tapped my chest.

He stared his bewilderment, then went away, locking the gate before he did so. A moment later he returned, accompanied by a gentleman in the uniform of an official; at least I judged him to be an official, he being arrayed in a uniform with gold braid.

"Baseball," I announced, with dignity, to the new arrival.

The man scratched his head.

"Baseball," I insisted, and showed it to him, plainly written on the card.

The newcomer went away, after signaling me to await his return. When he came back he was accompanied by a large gentleman with a black beard shaped like a trowel. The three of them stared at me through the iron gratings.

"Baseball," I said, taking no care whatever to hide my annoyance at their failure to understand, and their rudeness in keeping me waiting.

"Ah," and a great light dawned upon the man with the beard; "ah," he glowed again, "baseball."

"Certainly," I said. "Baseball—that's what I said at first."

Instantly the gates were opened and I was bowed into the stands. Whiskers led me along many passages until we came to the back of a crowd jammed

around an entrance. He called out. The crowd parted. He and I walked through.

Until I was shown a place in the press box I had no idea where I was being taken. But from the moment of my arrival there my international importance was never in doubt. A dozen dignitaries bowed to me. I received the obeisance with the casual insouciance I've seen H. M. George of England grant a nod from behind the glass windows of the royal coach.

Soon after I arrived, the umpires came on the field, three of them. I was a trifle bewildered when I noticed there was no agreement in the color of their trousers, one being in regulation blue, another in gray and the third arbiter affecting a light brown almost a fawn.

There were many preliminaries. Each team took the field three different times, then came into group just before its dugout, there to squat and receive instructions from excited managers. The plate was dusted a score of times, dusted by a coolie with a long-handled whisk broom. The band played "Ramona." The spectators shouted encouragement. There was needed only the bag of peanuts at the left hand and the bottle of soda at the right.

"Play ball," called the umpire.

And I could have kissed him. Out of that flood of unintelligible Japanese came the beloved cry of the American diamond.

"Play ball," he repeated. A siren blew. Festivities began.

Dairen used a southpaw with a build somewhat similar to that of Herb Pennock. He took a lazy wind-up, then uncorked a fast one that was a grayish streak and a pop in the catcher's mitt.

"Strike one," called the umpire, though I'm sure it was guesswork; no human eye could have followed the track of that whizzer.

It was the beginning, for the Dairen hurler spent the afternoon chipping corners off the platter, while the Tokyo lads enjoyed themselves in strolling to the post of honor, only to drag back after the arbiterial right thumb had been jerked upward three different times.

As a study in opposites the Tokyo pitcher was a perfect foil. He had nothing but a slow curve and a floater. Yet the lads from Dairen couldn't hit him.

And that, now that I've seen a half-dozen Japanese games, seems to be the fault, the only fault, with their play. They field well. They throw swift and true. They're good judges of fly balls and can run bases with the best. But they can't hit. Extra base blows are rare and many of their games end with small scores.

As the contest progressed I became more and more keen on Dairen, but since the crowd was screeching for the home team I discreetly kept silent. Once I thought a Dairen cleat would scar the plate, but a double play killed off the threat.

It was a thrill in the heart on that particular play to hear the spectators yell, "Get two! Get two!" The entire game is played in American—"ball," "strike," "foul," "coacher," "umpire." The positions are named the same and much of our slang is used. It's rather startling to hear these Americanisms springing from amidst the Japanese talk.

Because they speak the speech of the diamond, I've wasted several afternoons in crowds jammed about loud speakers, listening to big games being called—and understanding nothing save "ball," "strike," and "out."

The broadcasting of baseball is indicative of its popularity in Japan. Unquestionably, it has become the national sport. There are a dozen steel-and-concrete stadiums in the country, one of them seating seventy thousand spectators. These stadiums are used by amateurs only: there is no professional play in the empire.

Baseball was introduced into Japan thirty-six years ago. Japanese engineers who had been in the United States took the game home with them. An undergraduate of Keio University saw the engineers in an exhibition match. He told his friends. They translated a Spalding rule-book into Japanese. By 1920 baseball had achieved such popularity that the then Prince Regent, the now reigning Emperor, attended a game.

At present one of the most celebrated sporting

events of Japan is the annual high school tournament. Last year eight teams competed and at each match there were eighty-five thousand spectators. The American world series does not draw such a multitude.

Baseball has so gripped the island people that not long ago an ancient grudge was settled upon the diamond. A Christian mission school defied a Buddhist monastery. They flaunted their disdain in speech and letter. The Buddhists, infuriated by the slur, accepted the challenge. The two teams went upon the field after hours of prayer to their respective deities.

Inning after inning passed with only the twin procession of zeros marching across the scoreboard. Then the Buddhists scored, and there was great dejection among the Christians. Then the Christians scored, and there was more rejoicing over that lone tally than over ninety and nine made in other games. Through the next three innings the count was locked. One to one the record showed until the last of the ninth.

The first Christian singled. He was sacrificed to second. He went to third on a long fly to right. And then, amid the waving of palms and many hosannas, he rode into Jerusalem on his sliding pads—His Holiness, the Buddhist abbot, had fumbled a slow roller to short.

The Japanese crowds are eager and cheer with a feverish enthusiasm; but I have yet to hear a protest from the bleachers, regardless of the umpire's decision.

The players keenly fight the game until the final put-out, then the two teams line up on either side the home plate and bow to each other, after which they retire to their respective dugouts.

Baseball in Japan has reached such popularity that crowds block the streets before radio loud speakers. Mobs jam about newspaper offices where reports are received by telephone, by telegraph and by homing pigeons released at the field after each inning for flight to cages near the desk of the editor.

For any important game there is invariably such a rush it's almost impossible to obtain a seat—unless you hold a pass from the president of the Southern League.

VII

THEY laughed when the butler spoke to me in Japanese. I did not astonish them by answering fluently.

I've been in Japan about a month and I don't believe Max Müller, himself, could learn this language. Each day after I've thoroughly lost myself in the twisty little back streets of Tokyo, I hail a taxi and ask the driver to return me to my hotel. If he delivers me there I rather plume myself as a linguist.

The Japanese language is made up of four different languages: one for servants, one for equals, one for superiors and one for the imperial court. There are more than nine thousand characters, each requiring from two to sixteen brush strokes. The slight misplacement of one stroke alters the meaning of the expression.

Each character has two to seven distinct pronunciations. The same symbol means both "light" and "shade." Another can be translated "a short time." It also means "mother-in-law." There are two hundred and fourteen radicals which no law of grammar can harness. There is one section of the dictionary filled with characters whose radicals, even the dictionary admits, are "difficult to determine." Besides the indefinite laws of syntax, there are thousands of

quotations and allusions, which in Japanese constitutes almost a separate language, a language of suggestion.

Soon after I arrived in Japan I heard of foreigners getting the word for rickshaw-puller confused with a vile Japanese oath. I heard of an American lover who attempted to ask for a kiss. He requested, instead, that the girl commit suicide. I laughed at such mistakes. Surely I would not be so stupid. Then last week in a small inn some fifty miles from Tokyo I intended to ask for *budoshi,* for wine. A few minutes later the little serving maid returned and presented me with a *fundoshi,* a red loin cloth. Henceforth I stick to English and the language of fingers, hands, shoulders and eyebrows.

I can't help recalling what a friend told me before I left San Francisco. He assured me there was no need to worry about the linguistic barrier. "You needn't expect to pick up Japanese; it's one of the most difficult languages, but that won't trouble you. Every person, save farmers and natives in small villages, speaks English—every one does."

Since arriving in Japan I've talked with scores of Japanese who claim to speak English. As yet, I've encountered less than half a dozen who approximate an ease in conversation, and my contacts inevitably have been with hotel clerks, alleged interpreters, officers at tourist agencies and men associated with organizations whose employees are supposed to converse in English.

At a European hotel the concierge almost certainly speaks better English than a native of Chicago or Glasgow. These men never hesitate for a word and are able to discuss anything from politics to electricity, their vocabulary not being limited to a few phrases and sentences used in carrying on the routine of their business.

But the Japanese stammers and hesitates and sucks his teeth, then ends with something the meaning of which you have to guess. A foreigner attempting to learn about the country and the people is under a terrific linguistic handicap. The native seldom can do more than announce it's a fine day, or assure you America is a wonderful country (they're forever stretching oratorical hands of friendship toward the United States) or declare himself in some other equally fatuous manner.

The objection to such criticism is obvious. Why belittle the Japanese for not speaking English when there are so few persons in America or England who can converse in Japanese? The almighty difference is that we make no pretense of speaking the Oriental language. We know we can't and we don't make ourselves rather silly by pretending.

Until recently, English was a required study in Japanese schools. Many persons, therefore, have a thin smattering of our language—give a native of Nippon a thin smattering of anything and he'll dazzle you with it. But, unfortunately for him, no one can bluff a language.

Yet in the face of that realization not one in a dozen will admit he doesn't understand. Yesterday I said to the porter at the hotel, "Please tell the taxi driver to take me to a moving picture theatre." The porter, his face serenely expressive of complete understanding, answered, "Yes, sir, I will do as you say. I will have your luggage brought down immediately." Before dinner I said to my waiter, "How is the spinach cooked?" He bowed, "Yes, sir, one Martini, sir." They take for granted what you're going to say and they act on it. They will not confess their inability to comprehend. Such trivial stubbornness in individual pride is indicative, internationally indicative, of Japan.

In fairness one can have sympathy with the Japanese's difficulty in learning English. The reason for greatest worry, of course, is the variance in pronunciation of different teachers. In one classroom is a Cambridge graduate using the broad speech of England. In the next, the professor is from Connecticut. The third instructor may be an Australian, speaking that most damnable of all accents and enunciations.

The scholar in Japan recognizes this handicap and excuses his inability to understand English by citing contradictions in his oral instruction. He takes refuge in boasting his power to read and write our language with a quick facility. But I have heard American residents in the country deny the Japanese even this. Personally, I have been amazed by word jumbles received from educated Japanese.

And the uneducated! This is a manifesto of a laundryman in Kobe:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We the washers of ever kind of clothes blankets and so, newly established the company and engaged the business. Contrary to our opposite company we will most cleanly and carefully wash our customers with possible chief price:—

Ladies 2 dollars 100 per.
Gentlemen 1¼ dollar 100 per.

To our earnest request and honor we wish to have your pleasure to let us wash your clothes and so on.

The laundryman would not so demean himself as to ask the advice of a foreigner.

* * *

Telephones in Japan are under Government monopoly. If an individual or a business firm wishes a telephone, one of two methods may be followed. It is possible to apply directly to the Government. But such applications have been known to lie in wait for twenty-five years. The more usual method is to begin negotiations with a telephone broker, a man having no official connection with the Government.

These brokers have no other business. They and their office force keep detailed records of every telephone in Japan. If an individual dies, or if a business house closes its doors, the brokers are informed. They, in turn, consult their waiting lists and report to clients the possibility of obtaining a telephone. Sometimes the deal is closed between the broker and

one client. Sometimes the telephone is auctioned. Prices vary according to the ease with which a number can be remembered—555 fetching more than 683. The sum paid for a telephone, and paid before any Government charge is made, usually is near five thousand yen (two thousand five hundred dollars). Once the broker has closed the deal, the telephone is installed. The owner then begins to pay the Government fifty dollars a year rental with an extra fee of one and one-half cent for every call. Obviously the possession of a private telephone in Japan is an indication of wealth.

The brokers have evolved a system of speculation in telephones not unlike speculation in grain or cotton. Frequently they buy and sell on margin. They have been known to sell short, and when called have been forced to go into the market and pay a fabulous price in order to deliver.

If a telphone is ordered directly from the Government the delay is reckoned in decades. A father will place such an order at the birth of his son, hoping that when the child reaches its twenty-first birthday the telephone will have been delivered and the young man will then be able to sell it, thus obtaining a sum sufficent to enter business.

If one asks why years are required for the installation of a telephone, one is told the Japanese Government is not interested in spending its time and money in granting telephones to citizens. If one presses for further explanation he meets the inevitable stone wall,

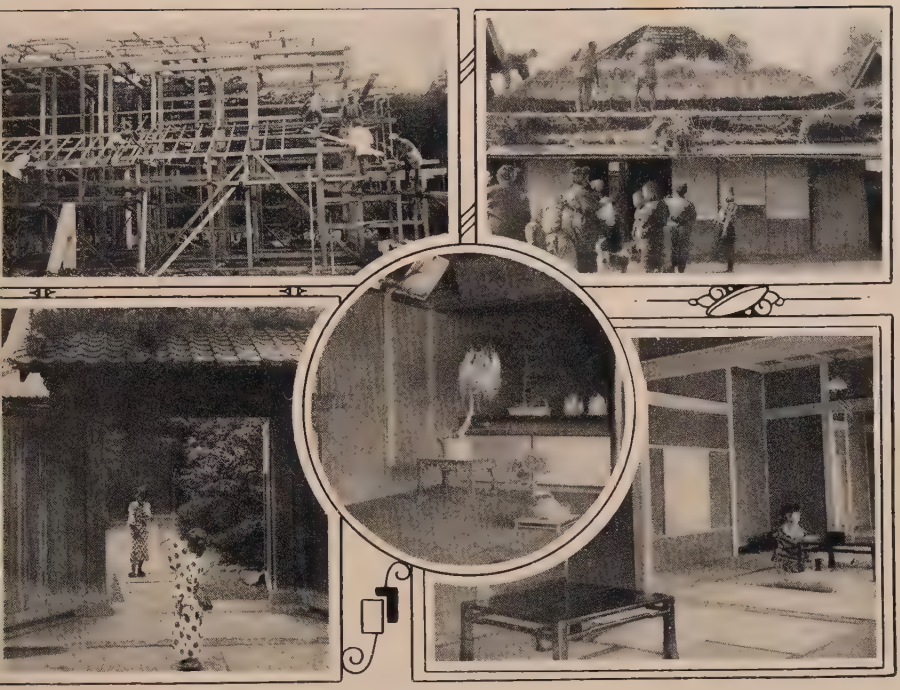
the wall over which there is no clambering: "It's Japanese way." There's no getting over or around that explanation. Scores of times I've been forced to accept "It's Japanese way" as a reason for some custom or practice which seemed without reason.

When using the telephone in Japan I've always put in my calls with the desk clerk at the hotel. After such a call is entered I have time to shave, lay out my clothes for the evening, read a chapter in a book and possibly write a few letters. Then the telephone in my room rings. The answer proves to be a flood of Japanese. In perfectly good English I announce I'm calling Mr. Ronald Matthewson at such and such number. More Japanese. More English. We both hang up. I try again. Same result. I try again. Same result. Then I go out, catch a taxi and ride to Ronald's home.

And so the telephone in Japan justifies its sale price.

. . .

I've learned to hate Japanese restriction on foreign tobacco. One cannot smoke the infernal stuff the Japanese blend. Their mixture is worse—God forgive the accusation—than the gutter sweepings sold in Italy. Yet the legal price of Occidental tobacco in Japan is almost prohibitive; the reason is that foreign tobacco is subject to an import duty of 355 per cent ad valorem. A package of cigarettes which sells for fifteen cents in New York is priced at seventy cents in Tokyo.



JAPANESE HOUSE

On the boat crossing the Pacific I heard of this robbery, and, following the advice of friends, I smuggled in three cartons of American cigarettes. With that amount I can hold out for a while, but it's pipe tobacco I want. Twice in desperation I've tried some of the Japanese blend. I simply can't smoke it.

There's only one way out. I learned of it last night. Straightway I made arrangements for relief. Tomorrow I shall be met by the best tobacco bootlegger in Japan. His wares are guaranteed not to be cut and to have been imported from Shanghai—where American tobacco is sold for half the price charged in America, this being because in China there is no government tax such as buyers in America are forced to pay. In the morning this Japanese gentleman, this friend of mankind—just as a bootlegger of New York, Little Rock or Tampa would deliver a case of Scotch or Bourbon—is bringing me two pounds of Imperial Cube Cut.

• • •

Yesterday afternoon I wrestled the *jujutsu* champion of Japan. This morning my muscles are sore. There are bruised spots on me.

Jujutsu, sometimes called *judo,* is both a sport and a manner of self-defense. It has been brought down from the days when Japanese knighthood was in flower. It's no good against pistols or guns, but it can hold its own against boxing or wrestling. The gentlemen of Japan still continue the exercise of their ancestors.

Unfortunately they continue it in such privacy that it's difficult for an outsider to view the sport. Since arriving in Japan I've pulled every string I could reach. Only yesterday did the door open. But yesterday, early in the morning, a Japanese friend announced that arrangements had been made: after lunch I was to be taken to the most famous judo school in the world.

At one o'clock our car stopped before an arched gate beyond which a garden blended brave reds and greens and yellows into an exquisite softness. We passed through the gate and there were met by a gentleman with terrific black whiskers and the body of a giant. Surely, I told myself, this man must be the greatest of them all; but my friend informed me that he was one of twenty teachers. He led us over the outer porch. The doors were drawn open by servants. Just beyond the threshold four other teachers bowed their welcome. Behind them stood the handsomest man I've ever seen.

"He only man in world in eighth class," whispered my Japanese friend, tremendously excited.

I had no idea what that meant, but when he bowed to me I bowed in return. Then he bowed again and again. I learned later that his courtesy caused the onlookers to regard me as a person of importance, since he ceremonially salutes only his social equals; though in my case he was, of course, greeting me as a foreigner.

He wore the black silken kimono of the Japanese

gentleman. More than any man I've ever seen he carried himself with unostentatious grace and dignity. My friend presented me, explaining to me that I was being introduced to the head of the school, the champion jujutsu wrestler of the world. The champion welcomed me to his country and to his school. We bowed several times, then he and I sat on the only two chairs. The teachers seated themselves upon pillows.

For a time, through the interpreter, we talked of judo. We watched the men and boys at their practice, the headmaster repeatedly pointing out unusually clever strokes or falls achieved by his pupils. Then he asked if I cared to witness a match. I expressed my eagerness and straightway he clapped his hands. Almost instantly the floor was cleared. The master spoke to two teachers. These men went to the center of the room.

The contestants wear white cotton drawers that reach to their knees. The coat, or jacket, is of heavy white material like whipcord. At the waist is tied a silken sash. The color of the sash announces the rank of the wearer, a rank won through competition.

Before the signal is given, the two men grasp the lapels of each other's jackets. Then the word is spoken—and they do remarkable things to each other. A match usually is three falls out of five and sometimes it's all ended within a minute. Almost never does it exceed five minutes. There are three methods of obtaining a fall. The opponent may be thrown cleanly; that is, thrown to his back while the aggressor re-

mains standing. He may be caused to surrender to a choke grip—brought about by one man thrusting an elbow into the throat of his adversary and thus forcing submission through strangulation. The other method of winning a match, as my interpreter calmly explained, is "break hand, arm, leg."

Even as I listened to accounts of famous matches in which bones had been broken and necks snapped, the champion, the only member of the eighth class, asked if I would grant the great honor of standing up against him. I blinked my terror but immediately realized that a refusal would be gross rudeness. I, therefore, sorrowfully accepted the invitation.

I was shown into an anteroom and a fresh jujutsu suit given me. As slowly I changed I thought of my books, of my dog, of the happy days I'd spent fishing or riding, of my dreams for the future. Then, while I pulled on my little cotton drawers, I considered the fact that he'd defeated every eligible opponent. He was the champion! He'd broken innumerable hands and arms and legs. I became doleful.

When I reëntered the main hall I found the champion waiting. To me he looked tremendous; in reality he was five feet ten inches in height and weighed two hundred and ten pounds.

First he dropped on his knees and touched his forehead to the mat. I did likewise, not forgetting to pray. When I peeped up from between my fingers he was standing erect. I rose and we prepared for the beginning of a match; we firmly caught the lapels of

each other's jacket. The interpreter told me I was to throw the champion. I tightened my grip and heaved. I've never tried to jerk up the Adirondack mountains—but I'm sure my meaning is plain. He didn't bat his eye. I heaved again with exactly the same results. After several efforts I was willing to call the match a draw, but he had other ideas. He suggested he show me one of the more simple falls. I agreed.

And with the first nod of my head I was somersaulting through the air and landing in the center of my back. The interpreter informed me I was to rise; the second fall was to begin immediately. As a matter of fact it began sooner than that, for as I touched his lapels he did something with his foot—I whirled in the other direction to strike on the soreness of my back.

Then the champion told me to hit him. I feinted with my left rather half-heartedly—I didn't want to hit a man who hadn't put up his guard—but somehow my following right didn't land. He caught my arm, twisted, and I cracked the mat again. In the next set-to I faked with my right and jabbed with my left. He stood me on my ear.

I was not having a good time. And when the interpreter handed me a club larger than a broom handle and half as long, when he told me to hit the champion where I liked, I was pleased. I squared off and circled around the gentleman twice, carefully choosing the spot on his head which I intended to elevate to

a large lump. Finally I was satisfied and struck with the stick, short and swift—so I thought. I'm not sure of the number of somersaults I turned, but I do know I ended with my head between my legs and my legs beneath my chin.

"That's how we defend self 'gainst sword. See?"

I grinned and longed for a machine gun. The interpreter asked if I wished further to test the skill of the champion. I expressed my thanks, bowed my recognition of his superiority, hoped silently that some day I might see him chained in a lion's den or floundering in a rolling sea, and then withdrew, not forgetting to kowtow upon my knees with my forehead to the mat.

I returned to where I had changed my clothes. There I found my bath had been prepared. Six coolies held six buckets of water. So soon as I was stripped they threw it upon me, then handed me a towel and went away.

After I'd finished dressing I went back to the large room and there attempted to understand the curious tricks of judo. But I didn't. Nor do I yet comprehend some of the feats accomplished by both teachers and pupils.

They fling each other over their heads—boys throw men twenty and thirty pounds heavier—they twist their legs and send opponents whirling, they jerk and pitch each other on the nose, and they do it with bewildering speed.

Jujutsu matches are never open to the public. No

admission is charged and spectators enter only by invitation. None of the participants is a professional and the matches are never for prizes. The teachers of judo receive salaries but that remuneration does not cause them to lose their amateur standing, neither does it lessen their prestige in the nation. The champion and those near the throne are received in highest circles. They are respected in Japan as university presidents are respected in America.

When leaving the school, after an infinity of courtesies and an abundance of kindness almost embarrassing, I was presented with a picture autographed by the champion—though I need no photograph to remind me of the gentleman who had so tumbled, tossed and battered me.

* * *

I heard a fascinating story at dinner this evening. A man who has lived in Japan many years told it. He swore every detail was true. As bluntly he related the facts, I adored little Kiyoko, the child who loved so bravely.

To-morrow I shall write of her—though no magazine will publish the story. Editors will say, wisely, "It could never have happened." Or they'll remember The Matron's Club of Peoria and hasten to return me the manuscript.

But no matter—occasionally one encounters a story which pleads to write itself, even though it dies, page by page, as it comes from the typewriter.

VIII

KIYOKO pushed an amber pin beneath the glossy puff and into the coil of moonless midnight. She moved her knees—so—two demure hobbles to the left—and sank back upon her heels. Her hands, fragile fans of ancient ivory, opened and her head tilted in contemplation. But her mirror was in playful mood and showed only the dream of a dream. Kiyoko recited this poem:

The red-haired sun thundered into the sky
and snarled at me,
But my heart strained outward with love
And a song sang itself upon my lips;
So he wrapped me in warm velvet
Woven from golden threads of morning.

A comb, carved by one whose dusty fingers long had clasped the root of the cherry tree, was thrust into Kiyoko's hair. A small chrysanthemum, purple like old blood, took its place opposite the comb. Then Kiyoko sighed and drew the flower from her hair. She laid it back upon her little dressing stand. She listened to the sparrows quarreling upon the branches of the camphor tree beside her window.

Kiyoko rose and stretched her tiny body—her body shaped with the soft symmetry of the weasel. With doll steps she crossed the room, and the sound of

her feet touching the mats was the sound of plum blossoms settling upon the face of a sleeping child. She drew forth a kimono colored like a drunken rainbow reeling through an angry sky. Her eyes caressed its splendor. But she sighed and put it back. Her hand touched the vapor silk of a kimono blue as the last daylight hour and marked with only a shy pattern. Kiyoko let fall the house kimono she wore. The red of her undergarments flashed for an instant before being smothered out beneath the silken blue.

A sash of scarlet and a sash green as the narrow leaf of the iris were rejected. Kiyoko placed the small pillow at her back. Over it and around her perfumed body she tied a sash colored with the paleness of young wisteria. With quiet care she looped and fastened it, allowing the ends to hang not more than ten inches. And she made this poem:

As the web of spider lace trembles
From the tender plucking of the wind,
So my web of love trembles
When yearning breathes softly upon it.

Little Kiyoko went into the presence of her mother and bowed five times. "I am going to the temple," she said.

Her mother bowed approval. She watched her daughter go from the room. She watched Kiyoko thrust her toes into rose-colored straps of straw sandals. She watched her walk quickly away.

"Kiyoko is sorrowful," said the mother. "Only one

month ago she played and sang, gay as the song of the glass ball when light winds tinkle its melody. But now she is old. Her eighteen years have become twice eighteen and twice, twice eighteen. Always she goes to the temple to pray. Kiyoko is sorrowful."

Kiyoko walked quickly, her kimono tightening at each step. Her large eyes saw nothing, save the dream of a dream. But those who passed looked and looked again, for little Kiyoko was more beautiful than the snowy pink summit of the cherry tree, than the blush of a white-robed nun, than the shy young moon above the eternal ermine of Fujiyama.

The dark, mossy stairway of the temple led steeply upward through a border of stone lanterns and cryptomeria. Men and women, bent and broken by years and cruelty, sold incense and paper prayers and little cakes. Two blind men sobbed back and forth at each other dolefully on wooden flutes.

Kiyoko passed beneath the great gate, lacquered red and adorned with carvings richly touched with gold. Inside the temple were vases and lamps and scripture rolls and the altar. But for Kiyoko there was no gate, no vase, no lamp, no scripture roll, no altar.

A priest beat a gong and chanted: "I put my faith in the Law of the White Lotus."

Momozono had come to the temple one month before. He was a young man and beneath his glistening head, freshly shaved, his features showed clear and

firm. His eyes, to Kiyoko, were pools under the pines at twilight. She saw him first as he struck the gong and chanted: "I put my faith in the Law of the White Lotus."

From that day each morning she went to the temple. Each morning she knelt and placed her hands before her. But all was the dream of an impossible dream. The law of God forbade her. Yet her little heart rebelled and loved until it strained outward.

Every one asked what had become of Kiyoko, what had become of the little girl whose wooden shoes had clattered faster than those of any other; whose stilts, like the legs of white herons strutting about marshy rice fields, were longer than any other's; whose laughter was like the spring water dancing through the water wheel far up on the hill: every one asked, but no one could answer. With her mother they shook their heads: "Kiyoko is sorrowful."

No one knew—save only, perhaps, Momozono. For the young priest had seen the child lotus among the blossoms of the temple. One morning as he walked toward the altar he had seen her. He had seen her looking up at him. As he passed he noticed her hands unconsciously free themselves from prayer and, like sleepy eyelids, close upon her breast. Momozono struck the gong and chanted: "I put my faith in the Law of the White Lotus."

The next morning the girl was there. He saw her, and, though it was morning, a myriad fireflies wove

mazes in the air before him. He struck the gong and chanted his faith.

The morning after, she knelt as if she prayed. And the morning after. Momozono began to fear her presence. His people felt the fury of his unrest.

Those who came and admitted sin were sent on pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain. The old priest had been a kindly man, of even temper and gently forgiving. But the young priest, Momozono, pardoned none. Each morning men and women outside the temple stooped to fasten the sandals of pilgrims, the sandals of those who sought expiation for their sins by the journey to Fujiyama, Holy Mountain.

One day the girl was not at the temple. The heart of the young priest exulted. He did not know that Kiyoko was away on her own little pilgrimage, that she had gone to Meguro, to the single mound beneath which sleep Gompachi and Komurasaki, the greatest of all lovers, and that in that silent place of prayer she whispered:

In the pool of sorrow where I go to wash myself
The water is plentiful,
But there is dust and dryness in the bath
I would flood with my joy.

Afterwards she asked that she and the priest, like lovers in the ancient story, might be twin birds and share a wing. With eyes wet as the bare branches of the maple in winter rain she spoke these words:

The echo of my sobbing
Is a candle light
Burning strongly behind sheltering screens,
Until the light goes away
With the shadows—
And the echo murmurs the memory of my yearning.

The next morning the girl was there. He saw her, peony, into her hair. She passed quickly beneath the gate and into the temple. She went to her accustomed place and formed her hands as if she prayed. But there rose from her heart only a great longing for him who struck the gong and declared his faith in the Law of the White Lotus.

When the priest drew near, Kiyoko took the flower from her hair and dropped it in the path of the holy one. And he, seeming to have eyes for only the altar, continued to walk toward the flower until, suddenly shortening one step, his foot trod upon and crushed the blossom. He passed on. The gong sounded triumphant; the voice of the priest soared in exultation.

The throat of little Kiyoko became only anguish and her heart was struck with a mighty pain. She rose and her eyes were dry. She walked from the temple and went away.

Kiyoko told the story of her love and showed the coins she carried. The old woman blew the flame and brewed the mixture. Then she handed the powder to Kiyoko. She swore by the gods of youth that within its sweet smell was compelling love. The girl

hid the package in the sleeve of her kimono and hurried to her home.

The next morning she heard the cock crow. She looked through the shutters of her room. She watched the sun gild the panels of scorched cryptomeria let into the high wall about the home. But so soon as the little birds had settled to the serious business of singing, she rose from her bed and began to dress herself.

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The red-haired sun thundered into the sky
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But my heart strained outward with love
And a song sang itself upon my lips;
So he wrapped me in warm velvet
Woven from golden threads of morning.

Kiyoko rose and stretched her tiny body—her body shaped with the soft symmetry of the weasel. Then a kimono of blue went about her. In the sleeve was carefully placed a tiny package. Kiyoko entered the presence of her mother and bowed five times.

"I am going to the temple," she said.

Up the dark, mossy stairway she hurried, neither hearing the flutes of the beggars nor seeing the extended palms of those who sold paper prayers and little cakes. She passed through the great gate, lac-

quered red, and into the temple. There she took her place as if she prayed. And there she placed an incense bowl and filled it with curious powder that, even before it burned, smelled of heavy sweetness.

"I put my faith in the Law of the White Lotus," chanted the strong, fearless voice behind her.

Kiyoko lighted the powder and prayed in good earnest. The sound of the gong grew stronger and the voice nearer. From the incense bowl swirled an odor like the morning breeze boasting its night of love among the flowers. The young priest walked past, nor did he look down. Kiyoko rose and slipped from the temple.

Outside she saw those men and women who had sinned. She saw them stoop to strap sandals upon their feet and prepare for the pilgrimage to Fujiyama, Holy Mountain. She saw those whom Momozono had sent in penance.

On the way home she stopped at the apothecary's and bought a poison; for, she told the man, she wished to destroy a kitten weak with a fearful disease. She vowed all else had been tried and there remained only poison. The apothecary sold her the little bottle. She placed it in her sleeve.

Late that evening Kiyoko sent Ju to supplicate both the father and the mother of Kiyoko to come to the side of their daughter. When the parents entered, they saw the girl on the futon unrolled upon the soft mats.

"I pained," said Kiyoko, "and I have emptied this

bottle of poison that I may die. Grant me, O my parents, to die the death of the dutiful. Grant me to die within the sacred temple."

Kiyoko's parents, greatly sorrowing, hastened to answer the wish of their daughter. They covered bamboo poles with tender satin and had her placed thereon. Then bearers came and carried her to the temple that she might enjoy the privilege of holy death, of dying within the solemn precincts.

Up the steep, mossy stairway they carried little Kiyoko, while her grief-stricken parents toiled after the strange bier. Once inside the temple the bearers bore their precious burden between vases, lamps and scripture rolls. They bore Kiyoko to the base of the altar. There they gently eased their shoulders and went away. And there the father and mother bent in sorrow while the young priest recited the scriptures.

Then the night wore on. The breathing of little Kiyoko became like the fitful calling of young pigeons heard afar off. Only the voice of the priest sounded strong. All else was weakness and sorrow. And the father of Kiyoko feared for her mother. He vowed such weeping would bring destruction. In anguish they went out from the temple, down the black and mossy way and returned to their home.

The spangled dome of ebony kept its silent watch as the hours came and went. The great heaviness of night muffled all but the cry of the owl. Then in the east the black dikes were rent and the gray blood of morning poured through. Thrusting his golden

arms rigid above him, the sun forced back the rim of night and shattered the black garret. The owl called no more, but the cock sang and sang and sang.

The mother of Kiyoko went to open the shutters to see why there was ecstasy in the song of the bird. She peered out, then peered again, then cried aloud to her husband: "Come, my husband, come. Our Kiyoko, our little daughter, walks quickly—nay, she dances through the gate and over the stones toward the entrance of our home. Look, my husband, has not her face a great radiance?"

And as the husband looked at the gay steps of little Kiyoko, the young priest of the temple was strapping on his sandals for a pilgrimage to Fujiyama, Holy Mountain, where one goes to expiate a great sin.

IX

YOU, Annette, I know to be an embarrassingly intelligent person. You've probably figured it out, though I admit I've always laughed when told Japanese remove their shoes each time they enter a house. But now that I understand the custom I realize it's more sensible than the Occidental practice of taking off the hat.

The two most interesting types of Japanese footwear are the *geta,* pronounced "gay-ta," and the *ashida,* pronounced as is. They are both wooden blocks, oblong or with rounded ends, which rest upon two narrow wooden supports. The supports for the geta are two inches in height; those for the ashida from six to eight inches.

And now, *chérie,* cast an eye over the streets of any Japanese city. Except for the main thoroughfares there is no paving and no drainage. After a rain the puddles are connected by a soft and clinging mush, composed of blackest mud with refuse liberally mingled. These muckways masquerading as streets explain the necessity for the ashida. A person in a Western shoe would wade ankle deep through mud: the Japanese walks in and out the puddles without dampening a toe. If one is wearing the ashida one's foot is kept clean, but the wooden supports gather

mud—that's why the native enters his house in socks. The practice of leaving the ashida outside prevents mud and filth from being tracked inside. The average home in Japan is spotless; the removal of the ashida makes such a condition possible.

An American seeking a house in Japan experiences considerable difficulty. Oriental owners fear Westerners will not always take off their shoes; they fear the house will become soiled. Foreigners sometimes are refused possession of a home for which they're willing to pay more than the ordinary rent.

In restaurants, and in other public places, the custom of shoe removal is strictly enforced. At the entrance shoes are taken off and checked at the same time as hat and umbrella. Clean straw sandals are provided and these are worn into the interior. The practice affords a Westerner considerable amusement. He must sit down, or, as is usually the case, since no place for sitting is provided, he must hop about on one leg while divesting himself of first one shoe and then the other.

To Occidental eyes the shoes of the Japanese are not the most curious part of their dress. It's the sartorial contradictions, the confused ensembles, which most attract the foreigner. On the streets of Tokyo one sees mixtures that are positively astounding.

There a man in a blue and white kimono wearing a bowler hat. Beside him a gentleman in European dress walking beneath a paper umbrella and fanning himself with a painted fan. Across the way a coolie

in short cotton drawers, burlap jacket and enormous straw hat—the sloping sides measure two feet from crown to base. A walk through the streets of a Japanese city would drive an orthodox tailor mad.

It is true that Western dress is decidedly popular with men. Furthermore, I'm told, it's constantly growing in favor. At present, though, more men wear kimonos than wear the conventional dress of Fifth Avenue or Bond Street.

Since I have been in Japan I've seen few native women in Western dress. That's cause for jubilation, for Japanese women do not look their best in European clothes. In their own costumes they're adorable, but put them in short skirts and one glance is too many. Why, I don't know; but it's unquestionably true that they lose charm once they're dressed according to the edicts of Paris.

The Japanese woman wears two kimonos. The outer is comparatively somber—a gray, brown, dark green or black. The inner is brightly gay. The hidden gayety, the hidden charm of the under kimono, contrasting with the outer quiet, is declared to be symbolic of Japanese womanhood.

Children dress like their elders, the one difference being that the kimonos of small boys and girls are brilliantly colored.

• • •

Rice is the all-essential food of Japan. It is, some declare, both sustenance for the body and refreshment

BINZULU AND HIS DEVOTEES

In the center is Binzulu, god of Japanese children.

for the spirit. It is the symbol of contentment: there are more shrines to the rice god than to any other deity. No meal is considered a meal unless rice is served. Three times each day the Japanese eat the smooth white grains.

The second requisite of a Japanese meal is the *daikon,* the pickled garden radish. It's larger than the American radish, is yellow, and is pickled in a paste of powdered rice bran and salt. To an untrained palate the taste is bitter and slightly gagging. The odor is vile.

At each meal some other vegetable besides the daikon is served. Vegetables are equally popular when pickled or boiled.

Japanese eat fish raw. They eat fish roasted, basted, boiled, salted, dried, or almost any way they can get it.

Meat is not often served in Japan. This fact is partly accounted for by the influence of Buddhism.

Milk, too, is shunned. The Japanese declare they do not like the taste of cow's milk. If told it is beneficial to children, they answer, "Mother's milk much better." It is for this reason that Japanese mothers are so slow to wean their children. (The practice has, of course, taken serious toll among the women of the nation.)

Experts declare that refusal to vary the rice, fish and vegetable diet is largely responsible for the tremendous Japanese mortality rate, twenty-two to the thousand.

Breakfast in Japan is taken sometimes in a family

group; more often an individual tray is served each person. In one corner is a bowl of rice. In another corner is a bowl of soup. There's a plate of pickled vegetables. There's a bowl of plums, kidney beans, pickled scallions or some other morning dainty. Tea is the breakfast drink.

Luncheon may be of vegetable soup; boiled and pickled vegetables; dried, fresh, or raw fish, and the same extras as at breakfast. Rice, of course, and always.

The evening meal is the principal one of the day and usually is eaten about sundown. The courses and the dishes are much the same as those at lunch, only there are more of them. Before the evening meal the Japanese usually has his bottle of sake.

Since being in Japan I've attended three banquets. I've learned that a foreigner experiences uneasiness as each course is served. He has no idea what he's eating and, naturally, he dare not ask.

One night, though, I was so fortunate as to have my little individual table placed near the table of an American gentleman who has been exceedingly kind to me—as has his wife. Frederick de Garis, a writer at present living in Japan, was good enough to name the various dishes as they were brought on.

It would be impossible to describe them all, but one might interest you. It was a bowl of soup served early in the evening. I tasted it and thought it reasonably palatable. Then suddenly I detected a fearsome looking object floating upon the surface. I peered care-

fully. I decided I didn't care for soup. There was a large and very intact fish eye glaring up at me. Mr. de Garis explained I was thus being honored.

There were slices of raw fish, there were chips of raw fish, there were hunks of raw fish. There were vegetables. There were lotus roots. There were boiled chestnuts. There was that vile-smelling radish.

The food was pleasant to look upon, was served in a quiet manner; there was both variety and quantity. I tasted here and tasted there and ate what I liked of each course. But I came from the banquet with unstifled memories of braised filet of beef, of roast duck or saddle of mutton—something into which a man's teeth can sink and meet luscious resistance.

* * *

Last night, three of us, a Japanese, another American and I, went to dinner, a movie and then a dance hall. In Japan it's terribly wicked to go to a dance hall. It's almost the unpardonable sin against ancestral holy ghosts.

Western dancing is charged with being modern, with being demoralizing. It has been stubbornly opposed by the older generation and only recently has been permitted by the authorities. Even now there are less than a dozen places in all Tokyo where the fox-trot is allowed. The national fathers fear American dancing. They fear it will corrupt their sons and deflower their daughters. They have so

often spoken this fear that public halls are in odium and only professional dancing girls go there.

Yet there should be no cause for worry. Between dances the men sit on one side of the room, the girls sit opposite. It is illegal for them to sit together. At the beginning of a dance each beau, dressed in silken kimono and deftly cooling himself with painted fan, goes to the imaginary line dividing the ballroom. From there he bows to the damsel of his choice. She comes out. They bow to each other and the festivities begin. At the end of the dance the boy gives the girl a five-cent ticket. They bow, then return to their places on opposite sides of the room.

We, my friends and I, arrived during an intermission. I saw the girls arrayed in brilliant kimonos. I thought them most attractive. Then I noticed their feet. They wore straw sandals! It seemed absurd. Surely no girl could dance when gripping a leather thong between her toes. But there I was in error. Some of them are excellent dancers.

Despite my inexperience, I found a partner who was a marvel. We fox-trotted slowly and with languorous subtlety. We waltzed as only a wholesome American boy and a simple Nipponese maiden could tread such a winsome measure. We even took a chance on a Charleston. As you painfully know, my Charleston doesn't register a particularly high temperature, but with this child of old Japan I really assaulted its intricacies. While no prizes were awarded we at least amused ourselves and my friends.

At the end of the dance I forgot to give the girl the ticket she had earned. She merely bowed and returned to her place. I danced with her twice again and both times forgot the tickets. Still she said nothing about them. Then suddenly I remembered and handed her a dozen. She accepted three and returned me the other nine. A little later I was leaving; I insisted she accept my extra tickets, which could be cashed when the place closed for the night. Hesitantly she received them.

Yachiyo was her name.

* * *

There's possibly a disappointment for you in the crêpe coolie coat you bought just before I left home. That jumble of yellows and reds and greens and the material itself is about as near a true Japanese coolie coat as New York is near the Ten Commandments.

The coolie is a laborer, performing lowest tasks—dragging unbelievable loads upon little carts, straining as a stone carrier in construction work, slaving as an assistant to skilled laborers, doing any job that requires no intelligence, that requires only a brow capable of unlimited sweating.

These fellows belong to different gangs. Coolies who hire as haulers belong to one. Coolies capable of unskilled labor in house building belong to another. There are scores of these groups. The membership in some is enormous, though the men have no conception of protecting themselves as do members of

labor unions in Western countries. They are organized primarily for the convenience of their employers; they derive only trivial benefits for themselves.

The chief of these benefits is that twice a year the master of the group gives each coolie a coat. This garment is cut in the same fashion as those worn by American girls. But there the similarity ends. The true coolie coat of Japan is dark blue and the material is denim. Around the bottom, upon the lapels and in the middle of the back are various markings, almost always in white lead, though occasionally in red. These designs and letterings tell what firm a coolie works for or to what gang he belongs.

It's quite difficult to buy the coats ready-made, that's because the individual coolie almost never purchases one for himself. They are ordered in job lots by the master of a gang or by a business house employing a number of laborers. I thought you might enjoy owning one, so I tried a dozen large department stores. None of them sold the coats. I searched the stalls in back streets, but had no luck. Then, three nights ago, at a little street fair I saw a pack peddler offering one, a new one—almost certainly stolen. After the usual argument I bought it for $1.25. It will be coming to you on the next mail boat.

* * *

This morning I saw a sign over the entrance to a small shop: "Ladies and Gents Tailoring. Ladies Have Fits Upstairs."

X

I HAD far rather attempt a discussion of government by the Gracchi. A personal history of both Gog and Magog would be easy. And, with Prescott's noble assistance, I should not worry about a paper on human sacrifice among the Aztecs. But, Dad, I can do no more than stammer an account of how Japan feels toward America, or how the individual Japanese regards the American traveler and the land whence he comes.

I received your letter three days ago and enjoyed all of it—until I came to your request that I tell you about international relations. That's rather a stiff job and, frankly, it's one I don't want. I've no desire to write of the smiling fists across the Pacific.

Since being in Japan I've naturally tried to learn the answer to the questions you ask. At present I honestly know my understanding to be insignificant. Yet time shouldn't enter into my worry, for if I lived in Japan a decade I couldn't send a comprehensible answer written with positive knowledge.

An old Japanese photographer I met last week suggested the impossibility of reporting the true feeling of individual Japanese for America and Americans. The old man said: "All people when talking about their country and another country say one thing with

their mouths. They say another thing with their hearts." And if that sounds like Edgar Guest blasting forth one of his discoveries anent the sanctity of the American home and the beauty of American motherhood, I can't help it. I believe the old man to have been exactly right when he, in his Japanese phraseology, declared that internationally we all are a lot of individual liars.

But if you still wish a letter about international relations, wish it after our common understanding of my complete ignorance upon the subject, then upon your own head be it. The enclosed is a lot of fa-fa and I know it, but only God can make a tree.

• • •

In 1852 Commodore Perry and his "Black Ships" sailed into Japanese waters. Forcibly the people were pulled from their national shell. That act is the title page of any history of modern Japan.

After we beat down their territorial door we began to trade with them. We helped them and they thanked us, though early in the game the Japanese knew our assistance was given for exactly the only reason international assistance is ever given, which is the desire on the part of the giver for economic and political gain.

Then came the Russo-Japanese war and Japan was victorious. She had met the white man and whipped him. During the Great War, so called, she and a few British, after a ridiculously long siege, overcame a

much smaller German force in Tsingtao. Again she had fought the white man and had whipped him. At the international comedy played at Versailles in 1918 Japan was granted a leading rôle. She successfully strutted her hour upon the stage, played behind an ancient mask and spoke her lines with cunning. The little brown breast was becoming mightily puffed.

Then in 1924, just six years after the peace pipe had emitted its blinding fog in the Hall of Mirrors, the United States reached across the Pacific with a diplomatic hand and slapped the national face of the Japanese people.

The Exclusion Act of 1924 was as great an insult as a nation could receive. It is, of course, impossible for an outsider to learn the truth in the various notes exchanged between the two Governments immediately prior to the passage of the act. Nor can any, save those within the Washington Sanhedrin, be certain exactly what prompted the law. But the troublesome fact is that in 1924 Japan was informed she was not wanted in America; furthermore, the Japanese people were told they would not be tolerated within our shores.

Such an insult from any country could not fail to infuriate Japan, particularly since Japan was just emerging from an insular chrysalis, and was coming forth possessed of the most blind chauvinistic conceit the modern world has known outside the military party in Prussia. But that the United States, "our big brother," should have administered the rebuff ag-

gravated the offense until the quick-tempered screamed for war. The Government press expressed great sorrow. And patriotic fools committed suicide on the steps of the American Embassy.

It was declared that Japan was maddened not so much by having her laborers barred from the United States as by the manner in which the American Congress had so rudely disdained all diplomatic negotiations with the island empire. Had Washington shown the usual international pretense of courtesy, Japanese national feathers would not have become so ruffled. Almost certainly the Oriental diplomats would have answered a recognition of their prerogative by agreeing to a form of exclusion entirely satisfactory to America. But Washington recognized nothing. She, almost without warning, passed the Exclusion Act, then asked Japan how she liked it. The Mikado accepted the affront with outward calm. He did not retaliate. But for those who believe human nature to be exactly that and nothing more—whether it be covered with an epidermis of white or yellow—for those who have vigorous confidence in the universal ability to hate, who have continuous assurance of international jealousy and bitterness, for such persons there can be no doubt about the true feeling of the Japanese toward a country affording such an indignity.

Some Japanese say the United States is not to be censured. They declare the laborers who immigrated were crude fellows and valueless to a young and vigorous country. Such declarations may momentarily be

sincere. But the discourtesy of the American Congress has not been, and will not be, forgotten. Individuals occasionally ignore or forgive an affront, but the peoples of the world at present are not prepared to overlook an international insult.

Besides the rancor resulting from the manner of passing the Exclusion Act, there is another and more subtle resentment toward America. Constantly it grows within the minds and souls of the Japanese. It is caused, so old residents say, by an inferiority complex, which, Freud avers, frequently acts as a goad to bravado.

When Herodotus pretended to quote the speech of Aristagoras he wrote the secret belief of every Japanese. "Gold, silver, bronze, embroidered garments, beasts and slaves; all this you might have for yourself if you so desired." Such a Japanese belief is prompted to-day by a national pride silly in its enormity. Yet, strangely enough, wedded to that belief is an unavoidable realization that, at present, Japan is not paramount and that the individual Japanese can be excelled. To many Japanese this understanding of scientific and material inferiority is altogether maddening.

Suppose to-morrow morning there landed at Broadway and Forty-second Street a Super-Neo-Airplane. From it there stepped the long-expected visitor from Mars. He tells us we must open relations with other planets. Then he shows us how to do it. He's taller than we. He can handle a bigger rifle than we. He

can ride a horse better than we. He knows about strange forces which cause our electricity to resemble the strength of a sickly baby. He constructs buildings for us overnight. He sweeps aside mountains with a blast of a strange hose.

We send delegations to Mars and they return to report marvels about which we know nothing. Soon hundreds of natives from the distant planet have come to live in our land. They erect our buildings, construct our railways, plan our ships.

The superiority of the Martians in certain fields of knowledge and accomplishments would be so evident we should be forced to admit it. But such an admittance, though made only to our midnight pillow, would be a thorn ever swelling. In a short time we should wish to rid ourselves of the Martians. We should want all they could teach. We should want all their knowledge. But once the bag of tricks was exposed, we should want them to go away and leave us entirely to ourselves.

Perhaps that unadmitted feeling of resentment has been the true incentive for the retirement of certain American engineers and scientists in the land of the Mikado. These men have been given banquets in which the crowded rooms were brilliantly lighted. They have been awarded medals, adorned with jewels which flash. Some have achieved The Order of the Rising Sun, third class. All have been eloquently thanked for their labors in Japan—and the speaker unfailingly has protested abiding friendship for

America and its people. Finally, each American scientific man has been honored by uniformed escorts of Japanese noblemen and statesmen, escorts who have saluted and raised hats as the American stepped upon the ship definitely taking him back to his own country.

And yet despite Japanese anger caused by the Exclusion Act, despite the irritating pique prompted by the realization of occasional inferiority, it is declared by men and women who long have studied in both countries that the present possibility of war between the United States and Japan is negligible.

The reason for this postponement of open and admitted friction lies not in the hearts of the people, not in the brains of so-called patriots, not in speeches made at the London Conference of 1930—where future battle lines were merely drawn more distinctly —not in any of these intangible factors; the true cause for peace on the Pacific is to be found in the report of the Japanese Minister of Finance. Japan simply hasn't the money to fight the United States. So long as American bankers can cause that condition to continue there will be no battles on the Pacific, no national heroes created out of human blood. It is true that the firebrands of Japan are imitating ancestral voices and prophesying war, but wise men—and wisdom sits in the legislative halls of Japan—know the present economic impossibility of fighting American gold.

Less money, fewer ships and a potentially smaller army will keep Japan diplomatically courteous to the

United States. And Washington will maintain its formal friendliness for the reason that fighting and even whipping Japan would not, at present, greatly benefit American trade.

XI

JAPANESE wrestling is a sport to which I have no aspirations—even if I could develop the size necessary to compete against the mountainous wrestlers of Nippon. Some of them are six feet, six inches in height. Many of them weigh more than three hundred pounds. A group of Japanese wrestlers dwarf the supposed giants of the Occidental prize ring.

The recorded history of wrestling in Japan goes back at least eight hundred years. There the tale is taken up by tradition and legend. These two veiled-faced, forked-tongued babblers combine to make a good story of the beginning.

In days long gone the Japanese amused themselves by putting yokes over the necks of two bulls. The yokes, with the bulls in them, were fitted one against the other and the animals were caused to shove until one gave way. At a later date an old ruler thought of having men take the place of the brutes. And that's how Japanese wrestling began.

The enormous size of the wrestlers is developed by tall lads of sixteen or seventeen being apprenticed to the masters. These men for years train the boys. They train them in exercise and they train them in eating—until each boy performs feats of strength and eats as much as ten ordinary persons. I've seen a

group of wrestlers at their feeding and it was painful to watch them. Strangely enough they want to be fat as well as muscular. The fat, they declare, protects their vital organs when their bodies are being battered and crashed about the ring.

Wrestling is the professional sport of Japan. Twice each year championships are held in Tokyo. The magnificent building in which the contests are staged was erected for the sole purpose of housing the sport. It will seat twenty-five thousand spectators.

The biannual ten days of competition are advertised throughout the land. Newspapers carry advance notices on the physical conditions of the favorites. Men go about the streets beating drums and announcing the event. It is literally the talk of the town. At the time of the contests the great amphitheater is jammed with excited enthusiasts.

Personally, I can't get excited about the sport. It's brutal and, to my eyes, stupid. There are forty-eight rules which govern the "twelve throws, twelve lifts, twelve twists and twelve throws over the back." When a rule is violated the audience shouts its scorn by declaring the contestant "fights like a farmer." This nicety of criticism seems rather curious after one learns that the four legal ways of obtaining a victory are butting with the head, twisting with the hips, grappling with the hands, or tripping with the feet.

A victory is won by a contestant's causing his opponent to touch the sanded floor with hand, knee, or any other part of the body save the soles of the feet. The

other method of obtaining a fall, and this is the more favored attack, is to force the opponent to step over the half-buried straw ropes which define the limits of the ring.

On the morning I went to the wrestling I saw four judges take their place first. Then the umpire, a man resplendently dressed and carrying a ceremonial fan, declared himself in readiness. Immediately two contestants stepped into the ring.

Each was arrayed in a loin cloth and a strong belt fastened like a bit of harness. Each was over six feet tall. Each had gigantic shoulders. But it was their bellies! As I stared at them I visioned the domes of St. Peter's and St. Paul's loose from their moorings and miraculously approaching each other.

After the men entered the ring they bowed. They turned back to back and crouched. They stretched their legs, first the right leg and then the left, very much as a rooster thrusts out his wing. I was told it was to loosen the muscles, but I don't believe it; I think it was merely show.

When they had done with stretching they stood erect and wheeled about, facing each other. At the same moment they again crouched. Resting on toes and doubled fists they glared, while their bellies lapped out before them in huge folds. Suddenly one of them sprang, but the umpire ruled the beginning had not been properly signaled; the men, he declared, had not breathed deeply and simultaneously. He disallowed the attack.

The wrestlers untangled themselves and stood. They rinsed their mouths with water. That was for purification. They scattered salt in the center of the ring and tossed a pinch over the shoulder. That was to indicate there was no personal animosity. After these ceremonies they returned to the crouch. More leg flexing. More glaring. Then the signal.

The wrestlers hurled their 340-360 pounds at each other with the apparent intent of doing murder. But in the original flurry neither was decisively victorious. They remained in curious posture; they leaned belly to belly. With arms about each other, great muscles bulging, the men groaned and snorted. Soon the tugging caused the belts to become shifted and disarrayed. The wrestlers were virtually naked. The umpire called time. Considerable adjustment of dress. More dippers of water. More scattering of salt. Then the umpire signaled them back. He fitted them together exactly as they had been.

They swayed and they strained and they blew out great bellows of weariness. Then suddenly, and with a wild snort, one of them kicked his opponent's feet half from under him. Almost at the same time he butted him just above the umbilicus. The result was that the recipient of these attentions squashed outside the ropes upon the fatness of his hindermost portion.

The matches begin each morning soon after breakfast. They continue until late in the afternoon. I soon tired of them. The first I saw was by far the best.

The others were too much ceremony and too little wrestling. In one match two men spent fourteen minutes getting ready. The bout was over in thirty-eight seconds. Another pair wasted eighteen minutes in stretching and scattering salt and all the rest of it. When the umpire gave the signal to begin, one man quietly reached forward, picked up his opponent, threw him clear of the ring and out into the front row seats.

I went back to the hotel in time for lunch, leaving the big fellows still pulling and straining at each other's belts. The crowd and the setting and the wrestlers themselves combine to make a picturesque spectacle, but the sport, as a sport, is, to me, rather uninteresting—and that despite its international fame and its popularity with the Japanese people.

* * *

On the electric train a few evenings ago I was holding a ticket for Ebisu, a suburb of Tokyo, where I was to dine with some friends. At every station the conductor walked along the platform and bawled, "Mayayaya." Just that and no more. I knew I was lost unless I could find some one who'd tell me when we arrived at Ebisu.

Then a Japanese Boy Scout appeared. He was equipped with khaki shorts, patrol insignia, hat, knapsack, canteen, pup tent—everything. Soon after he boarded the train I approached him.

But a Boy Scout in my native land and one on a train stopping ever so often at "Mayayaya" are two

entirely different members of Sir Baden-Powell's organization. Still, "Scouts are friendly," so I touched his uniform and pointed to myself. Instantly he snapped to a ramrod attention and showed me a marvelous salute. That checked it to me and I exhibited how it's done in America—while everybodv on the train began to regard me as a lunatic.

I handed the boy my ticket. He smiled and we started bowing to each other. He won on the seventh bow and I waited to be told when I arrived at Ebisu. At each station he held up his arm and prevented me from leaving the train. Then finally he shoved open the door: "Ebisu," he said, and gave me a fine salute. I saluted back. We grinned at each other. And the train carried him away.

* * *

The express trains of Japan are fine as any in America or Europe.

The observation cars are large, the seats comfortable and the windows big enough for the sun to come streaming in. The dining cars are well equipped and a traveler can get any food he likes. It has been my experience that all dishes are at least adequately prepared.

Attendants on Japanese trains are most courteous. Their first service is to bring a pair of slippers. As soon as you've put those on, the man returns with a fresh kimono. You go into a curtained-off recess and change into the kimono. A few minutes later the

attendant brings a pot of tea. You drink that. Then he comes back and holds out a basket of steaming hot towels twisted into hard rolls. He shakes one out and shows you how to rub your face and hands. You do as directed and learn that a face rub with a hot towel is most cooling.

Sleeping compartments on Japanese trains are fully as comfortable as those of the United States or Europe. The berths are larger, softer and the attendant lets you sleep later—all of which I like.

In the morning the train stops at a station. Every one gets out and crowds about little basins built into long, stone washstands. This part of it I don't like. Every one scrubs his face, his neck, his ears and any other parts he wants to scrub. He polishes his teeth and spits broadcast. Then he clears his throat with a mighty sound—again he's impartial about whom he spits on.

The electric trains of Tokyo are rather like the elevated trains in some of the larger American cities. They are clean, crowded and travel at terrific speed. It's rather peculiar to think of Japan, to think of an Oriental country, having the finest type electric train.

* * *

I've just been reading some of Lafcadio Hearn's writings on Japan. Before seeing the country I was frequently delighted by Hearn's superb descriptions. I still am charmed by the subtlety of his phrasing, by

his sureness in selection of words. Yet it's perfectly fair to pluck a crow with his literary ghost.

I used to accept as gospel virtually all Hearn wrote about Japan. I knew he was an enthusiast and occasionally I questioned some of his details, but I never doubted the impressions he conveyed. Now that I've been in Japan I realize he permitted himself a license which added glamour to his writings and increased the glory of Japan; but, unfortunately, his facts cannot be too carefully examined.

Hearn left the United States because he felt he was not appreciated. In Japan he was treated almost as a god. He turned native with a furore. He married a Japanese woman. He refused to meet or to talk with an Occidental.

In his books Hearn constantly insisted upon the fallacy, a fallacy easily detected by the traveler, that everything Japanese is perfect. Some day his writings will need to be revalued. His delicate style and its brilliant coloring will probably always be acclaimed, but his declarations about Japan will be—they must be —regarded merely as affirmations dictated by a persistent prejudice.

* * *

Tipping has caused me as much bewilderment as anything in Japan. Heretofore I have never been in a country where tipping isn't a sister to highway robbery.

Underlings in every part of the world welcome a

scratching of their palms. Head waiters in New York, orchestra leaders in Paris, conductors in German railway trains—they all accept any emolument offered. Even the pompous English butler receives his five-pound note quite as if it belonged to him before you gave it.

But in Japan, taxi drivers and employees of hotels, usually the most rapacious of all tip extractors, appear embarrassed when gratuities are offered. Twice I've had money returned to me. Other travelers tell of similar experiences.

Japanese of the upper class cite such happenings as proof of their people's pride.

* * *

Probably the native's hesitancy in accepting tips is due to the fact that Japan at present is not a tourist's country.

I had never thought of Tokyo as being like Paris or Vienna or Rome, yet I had expected to see numerous tourists. I was mistaken. A white man is so rare that when I walk along the Ginza, the main street of the town, I am politely peeped at by both men and women. There are tourists, of course, but they are few.

Only within recent years has the Government attempted to popularize Japan for travelers. But now a bureau has been established, pamphlets have been written, itineraries have been arranged—Japan knows she would profit in both finance and friendship if part

of the American pilgrimage to Europe could be deflected to the Orient.

. . .

The Japanese people are absolutely childlike in their quick pleasures, in the spontaneity of their laughter. The boys and girls seem forever to be racing about and playing gay pranks. The elders, apparently, are almost as lighthearted as their children. A slight provocation sends an entire room, even an entire street, into laughter.

One night on the Ginza I stopped to have a corner artist paint my picture. Before he made two strokes, there was a crowd. Before he finished, traffic on the sidewalk was blocked. Every one was laughing. Several persons showed me how to hold my head. One fellow stood behind the artist and mimicked my expression. It was a jolly party and after the picture had been delivered I bowed my appreciation. Almost every one on the street bowed in courteous response.

. . .

It would break your heart to see how horses are treated in Japan.

The coolies understand nothing about caring for the poor beasts. They slap and bang them until the animals are vicious and are looking for opportunities to bite or kick. They are frightfully underfed, receiving only chopped straw with bran, the mixture being soft-

CRICKET FIGHTING IN A CHINESE GARDEN

This picture of a mother watching her sons as they fight their crickets is painted upon silk. It is done in water colors, enamel and metallic gold. The inscription, from the brush of Chao-Yu, the famous Chinese artist, has been translated: "This beautiful and delicate painting was painted about the year 1400 by Tang Ba-fu. Such a masterpiece of work is rarely seen nowadays. Mr. Min-chao asked me to copy this picture after the original for Mr. Childers as a souvenir of his visit to Peiping, the Old Capital, during last Autumn."

ened by a little water. They get no oats, no hay, and no pasture unless they are upon a stock farm.

Almost invariably the carts and wagons are overloaded. Besides being forced to drag brutal loads, horses are harnessed with a tight check-rein. This strap prevents the head being raised for a comfortable start.

Coolies have one amusing practice with their horses. The silly men never ride in wagons or carts—never. Even when the cart is empty the coolie walks ahead, holding the bridle. That's invariable. There are two hundred thousand cartmen in Japan. Each of them each day wastes about two hours!

But try to find out the reason for the coolie's never riding. Try to do it! In fact, try to find the reason for anything in Japan. They'll tell you: "That Japanese way." That's all they will tell you. I've learned to like it, even when I don't.

* * *

Suicide, apparently, is popular in Japan.

If a business man or an official makes an error, he resigns. If the error is serious enough, he commits suicide. At the time of the great earthquake, the chief of the Tokyo police sent refugees to a certain open space. There, through no human fault whatever, they were burned. The chief promptly killed himself.

Hari-kiri, the patriotic suicide in which a man grasps a dagger and rips open his bowels, is the Japanese method of definitely expressing an opinion on

some issue. This absurdity was so popular in olden days that many castles had a special hari-kiri room. In the center was a platform shoulder high; upon this sat the man who wished to kill himself. His friends gathered to watch the show.

Until recently there was another form of self-destruction. It was called *seppuku.* Any condemned nobleman was granted the privilege of dying in this curious fashion. It was a compliment to his birth and, I suppose, to his death. The authorities granted the seppuku honor, but they took no chances on being tricked. They caused the sleeves of the nobleman's kimono to be tied in a manner that would force him, after he had ripped open his bowels, to fall forward with his neck extended. The governmental swordsman then whacked off his head.

Seppuku is, of course, but an Oriental version of the Romans' allowing celebrated statesmen and soldiers to open their veins in the bath, or the Greeks' permitting men of fame to drink the hemlock. . . . Petronius discoursing with his friends upon the delicate patterns formed by the blood as it flowed from his veins into the warm and perfumed water. Sacred old Socrates saying: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?"

To-day in Japan there is another form of suicide. It has only recently come into favor. Newspapers call it "The Love Pact." A young man and his sweetheart for some reason—economic, parental objection, or

merely to prove the ardor of their passions—go out on a pleasant morning and kill themselves.

One particular cliff is so frequently used for this lethal-love purpose that a social worker stuck up this sign: "Wait a minute. Don't commit suicide. Come to me and see if I can't help you solve your troubles."

* * *

There is one custom in Japan which Westerners would probably call a trifle informal.

Japanese servants and many members of the poorer classes bathe in public baths. Until ten years ago men and women, boys and girls, all bathed higgledy-piggledy. Then the law-makers said they didn't like it. Their disapproval was not prompted by a sudden modesty, but solely because foreigners continually criticized the Japanese practice of public bathing in the nude.

After the law was passed the police ordered a division of the sexes. The towns complied by building two baths where formerly one had been. But the villages considered the law absurd. They called it a sop to intrusive Western civilization. Innkeepers answered the edict by tying a string down the middle of the tank and thus dividing the sexes.

About three weeks ago I spent my first night at a country inn. Soon after arriving I asked for a bath. A servant conducted me to a small room and there provided me with a tub of hot water.

I bathed, then stepped from the tub and began to

dry myself. The bath boy set up an awful howl. He insisted that I follow him. I did, and he led me to a room where there was a wooden tank about ten feet square and three feet deep. He signed for me to get in. The water looked reasonably clean and I began to lower myself. The heat almost took my skin off. It was torture to get into that tank, but the sensible traveler in Japan tries to do as the Japanese, so I lowered away. Once immersed I lay there, only my head above the surface, while I peacefully parboiled.

I had been in the water probably three minutes when through the door opposite stepped a maiden like the dawn in russet mantle clad. She wore that and nothing more. A blink, a swallow, a cough followed each other rapidly. A second cough had no effect. The damsel approached the tank. With a toe she tested the water. Then slowly she lowered herself into the depths. I didn't know what to do, I didn't have any idea what to do. I grinned. She grinned. We both enjoyed the pleasures of the bath.

A few minutes later a man came in and made himself a member of our party. Then an elderly lady—I had to move over to make room for her. A third lady came. It was then I decided things were getting too matey for me. And so, masked in blushes, I scrambled out.

XII

MY dear R. A. Jelliffe: It's been ten years since you glanced up from your prompt book and said: "Your entrance, Crichton." Yet it doesn't seem so. I still see the conglomerate face of the audience. I still feel the warmth of the footlights. I still whisper Crichton's vows to Lady Mary. That evening is a favorite memory—I write as if already I were old and full of sleep—though it's but one of the memories that I owe to Oberlin College and to you, sir.

I haven't written during the years, neither have I forgotten. To-night I particularly remembered, probably because I've just come from a theatre where the performance unstrung my knees in homage.

Since last we met, Mr. Jelliffe, I've watched Walter Hampden sweep Cyrano's white plume across the threshold of heaven; I've heard Sybil Thorndyke ask Lucretia, mother of Beatrice Cenci, "to tie this girdle for me and bind this hair in any simple knot"; I've seen *Othello* at Stratford-on-Avon; *Tartuffe* in Paris; and one glorious evening I saw the *Medea* in Berlin. Yet I've never known the power of the theatre as I realized it to-night—and that understanding came from a play in which the dialogue was totally unintelligible to me.

To speak of "the Japanese theatre" is absurd, as if one inclusively discussed "the American theatre."

Would he mean the legs and lingerie of Mr. Ziegfeld's girls, the delicate power of Eva LeGallienne's productions, Mr. Morley's revivals, or the trumpets, searchlights and bass drums of David Belasco? One must be specific. Theatrical performances in Japan range from the classic drama of Oriental antiquity to the naked, quivering thigh of the *Folies Bergère.*

The Takaradzuka Follies is the most recent histrionic experiment in the land of the Mikado. This production is a Japanese version of the Casino de Paris, an Oriental depiction of Mr. Earl Carroll's more elaborately undressed reviews.

The one evening I went I suffered an hour of ladies arrayed as flowers, an hour of varied-colored spots, of modernistic drops, of chorus girls heaving themselves about the stage. All that I could have endured, but I screamed silently when from the right wing ambled one of the bastard daughters of Terpsichore. The sight of a toe dancer in the land of cherry blossoms chased me from the theatre.

In magnificent contrast with the Takaradzuka Follies is the *No,* the classic drama of Japan. Its solemn beauty has tremendously impressed me, though its meaning is entirely hidden.

The No is produced to-day exactly as it was five hundred years ago; even the original speech is retained. This archaic speech is, of course, lost on me—as a matter of fact it's lost on all Japanese save students of the drama—and, too, the mystical and ethical im-

port of the play is wasted upon me, but the quiet beauty of the setting, the strange appeal of the three drums and the flute, the exquisite grace of the actors combine with a suggested grandeur to create an impression grave and profound.

Yet it is neither the follies nor the classic drama that can rightly be called the popular theatre of Japan. The movies, of course, vastly outdraw all other theatricals, but the most celebrated legitimate productions are those of certain stock companies that have been in existence for generations. It was at the Kabukiza, the favorite stock theatre of Tokyo, that to-night I saw such a noble performance.

Before the play began I was fortunate enough to be taken back-stage. There I drank tea with "the best actor," as the lead is called. We couldn't talk with each other, save through interpreters, but I found him a charming man. Fine looking he was, easy in his manner, dignified and yet blessed with a jolly sense of humor. He promised me a part in his company, provided—and he winked at the interpreter—provided I'd learn the language.

I found the lighting back-stage to be entirely modern. There were properties of every nature. There were sixty dressing rooms, each floored with mats and having a small mirror standing eighteen inches high. There was a restaurant for the actors. There was another for the call boys. . . . Each actor has several call boys. The "best actor" had six. They assisted

him from his dressing room to the wings. Two boys carried his sword. One his hat. Another his outer coat. And two just attended him.

The play which so impressed me was as simple in plot as one could wish. I read the story from the playbill, which fortunately always is printed in both Japanese and English.

A young man believed he had been named by invisible powers to overthrow an oppressive government. He gathered a few friends and went forth, leaving his mother and his sweetheart. His plans prospered and soon he was head of an army. But in the decisive battle—the most magnificently staged battle I've ever seen—he was defeated. He escaped from the field and hid in the mountains.

One night, some months later, the son returned to his home. The mother was at her duties when she heard the rap of her boy. She opened the door and he came in quickly. After the greeting the mother began preparing the evening meal. But as she went about the house she saw strange shadows upon the shutters. She peered out and learned that their home was surrounded. Her son had been followed. She realized that inevitably he would be captured and tortured.

She poisoned the tea. Together they drank it. She laughed and told of her happiness because of his escape and return. She related her gay plans for the future. Then suddenly the poison gripped them. She implored

his forgiveness. Smiling they walked through the portals of death together.

The theme is conventional; the plot a heritage. But the perfection of the staging and the power of the acting caused my eyes to fill.

XIII

DEAR Mac: I'm ashamed of myself for not having written you since before I left San Francisco. Procrastination and inertia. Yet probably I shouldn't be writing now if I hadn't had a caller. Yesterday morning I was engaged in the usual vigorous activities; I was smoking my pipe and reading—it happened to be *The Saturday Evening Post,* which costs thirty-five cents over here—when my telephone rang. The person on the other end announced himself as Billy Nelson. There was so much what-ho in his greeting that I urged him to come right up, though I hadn't an idea who he was.

He turned out, Mac, to be the Billy Nelson who was in our squadron and who crashed with Thornwell Bagley in October of '18. At present Billy is traveling in Japan trying to sell American farm implements. He said he'd seen a squib in the paper and that he'd hurried around to call on me. He thought we might combine for a little innocent—"Define your terms, Protagoras,"—*passe-temps* about the village.

We lunched together. I was amazed at what the plastic surgeons have done with his face. You remember when they brought him in, you remember that the right side of his face seemed almost wiped away. Now there are only a few threadlike scars, an unpleasant

flatness about his cheek bone and rather a disconcerting trick of talking out the left side of his mouth. Neither of us mentioned the smash, though both of us were thinking of that great brute swirling down in its spin; both of us were thinking of Bagley tangled in the wires —with that damned Liberty motor catapulting into his back.

I asked what progress Japan was making in aviation. He said that compared to other countries she was making very little. He admitted the army and navy are going in strong for all breeds of planes, but he said that, for a peacefully aggressive power, Japan in the air is advancing with surprising slowness. As for commercial flying, he said, there's almost none of it. He predicted there wouldn't be much for some time to come. He believes this because distances are short, trains excellent, and the number of large cities few. Nor is the weather helpful, since year in and year out there's rain in Japan on three days out of every four. So far as I can tell, there's fog on the fourth. I've been here six weeks and haven't yet caught a glimpse of Fujiyama, though one clear day would have shown it to me.

After lunch Billy and I talked most of the afternoon away, then went for a walk and came back to dinner. Auld lang syne, potently assisted by some commendable brown sherry and two bottles of laudable Burgundy, sent us out for the evening in a mellow mood.

"Have you been to the Yoshiwarra?" asked Billy.

"The what?" I demanded.

"The what—you ask! The Yoshiwarra. It's one of the most notorious districts in all the world?"

"It's a subject," I vowed, "in which I have no interest. Taxi!"

You remember, Mac, those fish-eyed gentlemen who cluster about the Café de la Paix, who demand of us and of our fellow countrymen: "Want a guide, sir?" And you remember that once, and once only, we bought bottles of flat champagne and tipped broadcast that we might see what was faked for our benefit.

I know you haven't forgotten that suave individual who stopped us on the Via Partenope the first evening we were in Naples, the individual who inquired if we cared to see the Pompeiian dancers, the living statues and all the rest of it.

Then there was the double mirror in Berlin. And the little house with the extraordinary stone image just off the Ferencz József Rakpart in Budapest—that was the evening of the day we had come from Vienna down the blue Danube, and found it to be blue as any other muddy river. There was that hall in Prague where the incense was almost stifling. And that cursed place in Constantinople where, regardless of how inquisitive one may be about the strange facts of the world, there comes a feeling of nausea.

But about all those houses and districts and practices is a sordid sameness. The Occidental who knows commercial immorality as it exists from Havana to Nome, from London to Suez, knows only a great, unorganized business in which most female practition-

ers grossly peddle their bodies like pig iron. In the Yoshiwarra of Japanese cities this sordidness is banished.

A woman of Japan who alleviates the financial difficulties of her parents by voluntarily auctioning herself into prostitution not only obtains the desired bondage money but by her sacrifice gains great honor for herself. After her years of service in the brothel, the law requires that she receive a bounty. With this bonus she returns to the home of her family. From there she can be married exactly as if she had never left the parental hearth. Her period of servitude leaves no stigma; indeed, her activities as a courtesan are regarded as proof that she is a dutiful and kindly daughter.

In Japan are two distinct methods by which the Oriental sisters of Lais transact the business of harlotry. A gentleman may go to a tea house and there order a girl, citing the desired characteristics: size, age, arrangement of hair or any especially preferred eccentricity. He may go into the Yoshiwarra, the restricted district, and there personally select the girl of his penchant.

The Yoshiwarra of Tokyo, where Billy and I went this evening, is a twenty-minute drive from the heart of the city. One bounces and bumps through the muddy streets until his driver stops before two wooden gates that open inward.

"Yoshiwarra," says the driver, waving his hand toward the world beyond the gates.

I saw old men and old women, boys and girls and babies, passing through the portals as if they entered a cathedral, as if they walked the main street of the town.

"Surely," I said, "this can't be right."

"But it is," Billy answered. "These old folk are entering the district to call on their daughters. The children are brought along to see sister wearing the gay colors of her profession. They visit the girl because the girl can't visit them. She's never allowed outside her house—except twice each week when she's taken to the medical authorities for examination."

We stepped from the car into the mud of the road. Then we entered the district. In total size the place is about equal to four Occidental squares, though one may quickly be lost in the tiny streets that twist and turn and cross each other again. These narrow passageways are lined with seraglios.

The houses are the usual wooden structures of Japan. To one side of each entrance sits a man in a booth—it resembles the box office of a moving-picture theatre. These men sit and fan themselves and watch for potential customers.

"Mistah, mistah," they called, as Billy and I passed along. "Come here. Come here." They rapped with their fans. "Come here. Come here." They waved and sucked their teeth and grinned and grinned. From both sides the street sounded the same signals. "Come here. Come here."

"But I thought," I said, "that women in Japanese

brothels sat in compartments with only bamboo strips barring them from the public. I thought there were shaded lights softly enhancing their beauty."

"That was in the old days," Billy answered. "It's now against the law for women to show themselves. You see none at all. A prostitute must hide at the approach of every man. Notice how shyly the girls peep out—there—you see? They've heard that European men are wandering about and they wish to get a look at us. The present law is very strict in forbidding women from exhibiting themselves, but the owners of houses have answered the rule by a trick. Come look."

We stepped from the mud of the passage to the cement entrance of a house. The man in the box grinned. He pointed to where strong lights played down upon twelve photographs in a glass case.

"They," Billy explained, "are photographs of the girls in this house. You indicate the picture which interests you. After you've gone inside that particular girl will present herself. By the way," he added, "see that frame in which there's no picture, only a name?"

"Yes."

"Every house works that stall. The master says the girl has entered the house so recently there hasn't been time for a photograph. Many customers, desiring a young and fresh companion, order this girl. Usually she proves to be terrible. The master hasn't dared show her picture."

We stepped out into the mud again and passed along. Continually we heard the hisses and calls of

the pimps. Again and again came the cry: "Mistah, come here. Come here."

"That's all the English any of them know," Billy declared. "Several times I've wandered from one end of the place to the other; I've never found any one who speaks English."

We turned a corner and came upon a particularly clean-looking house. The man in the box rapped with his fan. He signed us to inspect the photographs.

"Look here, Billy," I said, "I intend seeing the inside of one of these bordels; I intend seeing it all. I mean to inspect everything about the place."

"You haven't a hope," he answered. "In the first place you can't tell that fellow you want just to wander through, and even if he understood he wouldn't allow it."

"I've traveled long enough to know better than that. Come on."

I laid two ten-yen notes on the counter. Then I signaled to all parts of the house. I gave a good imitation of a person looking at everything. The chap grinned and kept pointing at the photographs. I shook my head. He made some unmistakable gestures. Again I shook my head. That stumped him.

"Here, Pandarus," I said, and handed him one of the ten-yen notes. "Take that." I caught his kimono sleeve and dragged him toward the entrance. Instantly there was a quick scurry of stockinged feet; the girls, who had been peeping through the curtains, fled before us. "And this," I said, showing him the other ten-yen

note, "is yours after you've showed me everything from the bedrooms to the kitchen. Savvy?"

He didn't, but since I wouldn't release his kimono he came along with us. At the entrance Billy and I started in, but the fellow I was holding voiced a most unearthly protest. He kept pointing to our feet.

"Here's a delicacy," Billy said, as he sat down and began to remove his shoes.

"Quite the home touch," I agreed, "though I don't like the system. Yet I suppose it has advantages—think how easy for a Japanese wife to discover her erring husband."

Inside we were met by three old harridans. They dropped on their knees and touched the mats with their foreheads. Half a dozen male servants, the upper parts of their bodies unclothed, ran forward and saluted us in the same fashion. Then they stood and stared their inquiry. Again I waved my hand. They blinked. I peered all about me, looked up the stairs, looked down each passage. After considerable pantomime on my part, one of the ancient strumpets finally caught my meaning. She set up a great jabbering. Instantly it swelled to a chorus.

I give you my word, Mac, that royal visitors to a distant colony could not have been treated more graciously and kindly than Billy and I were treated by the inmates of that Japanese bagnio.

One side of the first floor was given over to the girls. There were fifteen of them. Each had two and a half square yards of mat space. In this allotted

area stood her little mirror, eighteen inches in height; and about it lay cosmetics, ribbons and other articles of her toilet. Hanging near were different colored kimonos.

When Billy and I entered this large room we saw the girls seated upon the mats. They glanced at us, then quickly looked away. Some of them turned their backs. Billy explained that this was not rudeness: they thought we had come to choose two of them. Japanese women, he said, even the courtesans, physically loathe white men, regarding them sexually as most white women regard Orientals.

Opposite the girls' room were the baths, the kitchen and the servants' sleeping quarters. In the courtyard three small children played a game like hide-and-seek. A baby lay upon the futon; his little lips alternately fluffed outward and quietly sank. The tank in the bath was filled with fresh water. The kitchen was clean as an Occidental parlor. The servants' sleeping rooms were clean.

Upstairs were the social apartments. At one end of the house was a large room where guests ordinarily are taken immediately after entering. There one is served tea. There one chats with the master, with his wife and with other guests of equal social standing. And there, too, one first sees the girl whose picture he has indicated.

Into this room the girl enters. She wears the gay kimono of a virgin. In her hair are woven flowers and thrust there are ivory pins delicately carved. She

is demure, shy. The guest signifies that the girl is pleasing. She rises and goes away. She returns to the dressing room on the lower floor. There she removes the flowers and pins from her hair. There she takes off the kimono of a virgin. There she dons the kimono of the married woman. She mounts the stairs once more. She reënters the reception room. She wears the garments of one ready to serve the wants of her lord.

Leading out from the reception room is a long hallway. On each side are bedrooms about eight feet square, bedrooms that are ever ready. Upon the floor of each are the futon which compose the Japanese bed. Upon each bed is the wooden pillow for a woman and the little round pillow for a man. The walls of these rooms are five and a half feet in height. From there to the ceiling, a distance of another foot and a half, is an open lattice of bamboo. A tall person wandering through such a house is frequently and mightily embarrassed.

Charges vary according to the rank of the establishment. In the most expensive houses a Japanese man pays a dollar for a visit of an hour. For the night he pays two dollars. The price is doubled for a European guest: an American or Englishman pays two dollars for an hour, four dollars for the night. Besides this set fee one should tip twenty-five or fifty cents to the old woman who serves the tea. A few coppers are supposed to be passed to the male servants. It is only in the best houses that such high charges

are made and such tips expected. There are some places in Tokyo where a Japanese man can spend an hour for a fee of twenty-five cents.

All payments, save tips, are made to the master of the house. He retains the money until the woman is at the end of her service. He then gives her a percentage of her earnings, plus the bonus legally required.

When Billy and I completed our tour we signed that we were ready to depart. Every one stared blankly at us. The old woman protested and the servants shook their heads. Still we persisted in walking toward the exit. The man to whom I'd given the ten-yen note seemed particularly worried and, finally, just before we passed beneath the outer curtain, he offered to return the money.

"This honesty," I said, "is a trifle out of place and, besides, old fellow, I meant for you to keep it."

When he understood my gestures he caught my arm and with the assistance of the servants led Billy and me back upstairs to the reception room. There we were served with finest teas. There we ate sweetened rice cakes. There, once it was understood we wanted only to see, the girls came and played jankempo with us. They told hilarious Japanese jokes which left Billy and me blinking our inquiries but which sent them into fits of laughter. They tried to teach us to eat with chopsticks—I skidded a gobbet of soft goo half across the table and they almost went into stitches. Each of them laid her arm beside mine and compared the

difference in the color. They asked me to stand and they stood beside me, measuring how near each came to my shoulder. My height gave me an advantage, until Billy began blowing smoke rings. After that I didn't have a chance.

Before we left we gave each girl a yen, each servant twenty-five sen and the man on the box his promised additional ten yen. Our departure was Assurbanipal going without the royal gates! The servants rubbed their foreheads on the mats. Three men helped me put on my right shoe. Three helped me put on my left shoe. The man on the box bowed until he almost lost his balance. The girls peeped from behind curtains and wished us long life and lots of pleasure. It was really rather sad, if you know what I mean. I was distinctly moody when once more we stepped into the mud of the highway.

Outside the restricted districts there is yet another Japanese locale for libidinous companionship. One may go to a tea house—which, so far as I can ascertain, is called a tea house because one does everything there except drink tea—and ask the madame to order a girl.

Last week I was taken to one of these places in Kyoto. My chaperon was Pete, the second porter at the hotel. A stout Japanese lad he was, too. He had been interpreter at the law courts of Seattle and spoke good English. Besides which, he could drink sake faster than two serving maids could pour it.

He led me from the main section of Kyoto and

along the river toward the most famous tea house. As I walked, and he staggered, we passed a man crouched over a small red lamp. Beside the lamp stood a wooden cup with small bamboo sticks inside.

"What's that man?" I asked.

"Fortune teller, sir," answered Pete. "He'll tell your past, present and future."

"Fine—" and I paid the required twenty-five cents.

The seer jumbled the sticks and asked me to select three. I did. After much incantation I was told, through Pete, that I was to inherit a lot of money, that I would fall in love with a dark woman, that I would live to an old age.

"He no damned good," growled Pete. "I could have told you that." He zigzagged down the street. "Follow me, sir."

I followed until we came upon a group of men banging bells and whirling lights and chanting weird songs. I asked who they were and what they were doing. Pete spat copiously.

"Buddhist priests," he said. "Wasting time trying to save whores' souls. Follow me, sir."

After a deal more following we arrived at the most celebrated tea house. Pete entered with gusto. But we were received quietly. There was none of the friendliness shown Billy and me in the Tokyo Yoshiwarra. In that Kyoto tea house there was a dignity and a calm efficiency rather stifling to romance.

Pete and I were escorted to a reception room on the second floor. There two elderly ladies and a

gentleman came in, drank tea with us and chatted for a time. They asked our wants.

"Tell them I just want to look around," I instructed Pete.

He blinked and made a noble effort to focus his eyes. "But there isn't anything to see," he said. "Just ordinary Japanese house. Rooms and stairs and rooms. Better order some girls, sir."

"Then order some girls."

Pete did. Our hosts withdrew and left my friend and me to the teacups. I pointed to a sign written in Japanese characters and hanging on the wall.

"What does that sign say?" I asked.

"It says," he answered, "that this is just like your home. Make yourself at ease."

We drank our tea and Pete informed me he had ordered a large girl, one of lightest coloring, for me. We went on drinking our tea. Then, without any rap or warning, the paper door slid back. I could not see who moved it. But there at the entrance crouched a woman upon her knees. Her palms were flat upon the mat and her forehead rested between her hands. Instantly she sat erect and peered blankly beyond us. Her gay kimono was the kimono of a virgin. In her hair, flowers had been woven and carved pins had been thrust into the coils.

"Like her?" Pete demanded, rather laconically I thought.

"Well, frankly, no. You see, I—"

But Pete didn't wait to see. He waved his hand.

The woman dropped her forehead again and the door slid closed.

"That'll cost you one yen," Pete announced.

"But why? She did nothing and—"

"The madame of this tea house had to telephone the central office that a girl was wanted. The girl was checked out of her house; the minute she left was recorded. She's charged for the time she's away and immediately she returns the central office is notified. Each girl has to be paid one yen, even though the man merely looks at her and rejects her. But if you had taken her you'd have paid four yen. You can have as many girls as you like. One yen to see them, four yen to have them."

"I understand. Rather depends on how much yen you have."

Again the door slid back. Another girl crouched before us. Pete clapped his hands. She sat erect. Despite the utter absence of expression she was beautiful.

"Ask her in," I said.

Pete spoke and instantly she smiled, a bright, attractive smile it was. She came quickly into the room and crouched between us. Pete pointed to me. She moved to my side of the table. I signed for her to have a cup of tea. She bowed and accepted my invitation.

The door opened for the third time. After the usual formalities Pete declared his interest in the visitor. My guest, whose name was Miss Daruma,

remained in the reception room where we drank many cups of tea. She carried a small parcel. I pointed to it. She bowed her head and laughed as if somewhat embarrassed. Then she opened the parcel. Inside was the kimono of a married woman.

Before we left, the owner of the tea house presented me with a bill. Save that it was in Japanese characters it was like a statement from any American or English business house. There was the name of the firm and the various blanks for entries.

For Miss Oko I was charged one yen—Miss Oko being the lady who had been rejected. Miss Kyogoku cost me two yen, she being Pete's companion. Miss Daruma was valued at four yen, twice as much as Miss Kyogoku; but then I was a European man, and it made no difference that we had remained in the reception room drinking tea.

At one side of the bill was a printed statement that Pete translated: "Please examine this account before leaving, because, once the customer has gone away he can not return and claim a refund."

Just a few doors from the tea house was a brightly lighted shop where sliced watermelon was being sold. I noticed that both girls gazed inside as we passed. I suggested we all go in and sample the delicacy. In we went. Everything was most jolly—Miss Daruma sang a little song—then suddenly Miss Kyogoku glanced at her tiny wrist watch. She spoke quickly to Miss Daruma. Both reached for the parcels they had with them.

"They must hurry back," Pete said. "They have only a few minutes to get back within the hour. If they are out longer they'll each be charged another yen. They would have to pay it from their own pockets."

"That's all right," I answered. "Tell them to stay and forget about the yen. I'll pay it."

Pete translated and immediately the girls were gay and laughing again. Miss Daruma sang us another little song. Miss Kyogoku quoted a poem. Twice Pete tried to buck dance, but for some reason his balance seemed to trouble him. When finally we parted, the girls bowed more than thirteen times. Pete informed me that they thanked me, and wished me well, and sent their greetings to my parents.

As I walked back toward the river, Pete ambling beside me, I saw dozens of tiny girls hurrying along the narrow streets. Each of them wore the gay kimono of a virgin, and each carried a small parcel.

XIV

DEAR Dad: With a laziness almost worthy of my heritage I've spent the past week at Nikko and Lake Chuzenji. I've enjoyed my slumbers, my cakes and my ale with a gusto unknown since Falstaff. Indeed, my life for the last seven days would cause even Sir John to seem an abstemious, industrious fellow. But the end is at hand; to-morrow morning I leave and return to Tokyo. And there, after a quick good-by to friends, I'll catch the express train for Osaka. I'll sail through the Inland Sea for Shimonoseki, where I take ship for Fusan, the entering port of Korea.

I've enjoyed Japan tremendously and rather hate to journey on—but I've been here three months; if I'm ever to get home again I'll have to be moving.

I think one of the biggest disappointments I've known in traveling I experienced at Nikko. For my last trip I'd saved the city of ancient shrines. I wanted to carry away my memories of Japan wrapped in the warm glow of Nikko's rumored beauty.

One approaches the holy place through an avenue of giant cryptomeria—mighty trees that are humbling in their grandeur. But the temples themselves are a depressing confusion. There are too many of them, and they are too intricately decorated. Artistic indecorum is a sin of which I hardly suspected the Japa-

nese, but the shrines testify against the people. The carvings are jumbled and red lacquer and gold are splattered about as if they were whitewash. Fierce gods tumble one over the other, and, where a single deity might successfully protest his divinity, the entire population of the Japanese Olympus is merely grotesque. I felt as if hearing five different orchestras playing at the same moment.

I hunted up the celebrated monkeys and had a good look. I had to smile as I peered at their threefold sermon: "Hear no, speak no, see no evil."

They are carved on the façade of the sacred stable. And inside the sacred stable stands the sacred horse. All he does from day's end to day's end is munch the sacred oats and complete the sacred digestion. What a life!

Two days in Nikko and I had a plethora of rococo architecture. I felt that the elaborate shrines would cause me to scream aloud for a straight line, a simple curve, a chaste column, an interior of quiet dignity.

Then I came to Lake Chuzenji. And here the gods, understanding the beauty of simplicity and suggestion, have given in abundance all for which I yearned. The lake, the mountains, the waterfall, the sun—it's glorious, a dream world. Last night a young moon minced its way through the heavens. Ever and again a mist momentarily veiled her virgin beauty. I felt as if Diana in some mood of unwonted modesty strove to shadow herself—I looked away, for I feared the fate of Actæon.

. . .

In your last two letters you've asked that I tell the cost of living in Japan. I hardly know how to go about it, though perhaps I'd best consider salaries, then cite actual expenses. And suppose I put the figures all in dollars; it will be easier to understand.

A boy graduate from a Japanese middle school, our high school, is eligible for a job in a Government office at $15 a month. After ten years he receives $45 a month. At the end of fifteen years, if he's lucky, he has become an official with a salary of $100. After twenty years his pay may be $150, though such a sum is exceptional and could be earned by only a talented worker.

A Tokyo policeman is paid $37 a month.

A trained and thoroughly competent stenographer receives $20 a month.

A high-class office man is getting near top salary if he draws $75 a month. Suppose we consider such a man and his financial worries.

His house rent is about $17 a month, for rent in Japan is comparatively expensive. Breakfast for the family costs 30¢. Luncheon (the man eating at a café for 15¢) amounts to 30¢. Dinner might cost as much as 40¢. That's $1 a day. Add $5 for feasts and the cost of food for a middle class family of five is $35 a month.

Clothing is the most difficult of all items to estimate. The initial price is considerable, but the gar-

ment is worn through the years. The wife of the seventy-five-dollar-a-month clerk spends about forty-five dollars for her outer and nether kimono, her underclothes, sash, shoes and combs. The man lays out probably the same amount for his Japanese clothes. His European suit costs him another thirty-five dollars.

These figures loom large, but it must be remembered that a single outfit is made to last through five or six years. Children's clothes are shamelessly cut down until father's kimono is finally too small for the sixth baby.

Taxes would average $2.50 a month. That amount taken from seventy-five dollars is outrageous, but the Government is in constant financial difficulty and the people are taxed exorbitantly.

Incidentals, street car fare, amusements, toys, etc., are half their cost in America or England.

The monthly budget would be something like this: food, $35; rent, $17; clothing, $5; taxes, $2.50; fuel, $1; wages of nurse and house servant, $3; milk, $2; education of children, $1; incidentals, $3.50. The total essential monthly expenditure is $70. That leaves $5 for the doctor, the dentist and the priest.

Careful expenditure is required, but the family manages to see an occasional play, to have flowers in the vases, and still put aside a few pennies each month.

CHINESE CHOW

At dinner in the home of a Japanese friend I noticed a bowl of green stuff in the center of the table. It was arranged unusually and I asked about it. The host explained it was placed there in my honor and had this meaning: The pine leaves were long and wished me a long life; the fern, with its many sprigs, expressed the hope that the guest might be blessed and multiply; the bamboo leaf is constant; the plum tree blooms in February and is, therefore, strong and durable.

* * *

This friend has been married for fifteen years to an American woman. She is the mother of four children. I had been told she is one of the few American women successful in a mixed marriage. Old residents of Japan declare such marriages ordinarily are failures.

I was eager to meet the woman. I met her. Throughout the evening I talked with her as much as I courteously could. When I went away I felt I had met a master sportswoman, one who had dealt herself strange and baffling cards, but who had determined to play out the hand.

Once she mentioned her children. Later she admitted that other boys scoffingly referred to her sons as Eurasians.

* * *

I have just been reading a most enlightening book. It is written by the Emily Post of Japan.

"When a lady is in the presence of a superior, do not scratch yourself; but if any part of your body itches so badly that you cannot help scratching it, put a finger on the spot and give a hard scratch so that the itchiness may be absorbed in the pain so caused.

"Do not wipe sweat off your face or blow your nose; but if you must do so, run into the next room or turn your face away from your superior. In blowing your nose, first blow gently, then a little louder, and finally gently again."

Which causes me to remember that Japanese do not use linen handkerchiefs. Instead, they carry sheets of thin, soft paper. As it is required, the paper is used, wadded up and thrown aside.

* * *

In out-of-the-way places in Japan one often comes upon tiny shrines. They are placed helter-skelter, just as images of the Virgin are scattered over Italy.

Usually the Japanese sanctuaries are of wood, like dry goods boxes with a sloping roof. In front hangs a rope attached to a bell. Before one prays he must sound the bell or clap the hands. This is to summon the god and to assure his attention.

Pasted over the shrines are small squares of paper with names upon them. These are the calling cards of the religious devotees. Pilgrims on ceremonial tour leave one at each shrine visited. Inside, scores of

pictures are hung. They have been placed there by women desirous of ease in delivery.

* * *

Bonsai, the growing of dwarf trees, is one of the most interesting arts of Japan.

The dwarf favorites are a needle-leaf pine and a Mongolian oak. Some have been potted for more than a century and are valued as high as two thousand dollars. The cryptomeria, maple, ground cypress, cherry and other trees are frequently seen in miniature, ranging in height from ten to eighteen inches. To the unpracticed eye they are perfect. Some specimens have two trunks, some a single trunk; at times two species are grafted together.

Knowledge of exactly how these dwarfs are produced is esoteric. The general scheme is freely divulged, but the final secrets are hidden behind a smile and a friendly bow. It is commonly known that the process begins by the selection of dwarf tree seedlings. The main roots are cut away and only the small roots allowed to develop. This is done periodically. Weights are placed on the branches to make them hang downward in curved shapes. The tree is kept always in a shaded location. Six to ten years are required to complete the stunting of the growth.

The little trees are so attractive that I wanted to send you half a dozen. They'd make an interesting display in a sun parlor. But the American consul wouldn't hear of it. He cited the United States law

forbidding their importation, because they carry parasites injurious to other trees.

• • •

In hotels, railways stations and other public places, one often sees a woman take a purse from her *obi,* her sash, and pay the bill or buy the tickets. While this goes on, the man saunters away. I began to wonder about Japanese gentlemen; but last night I learned that all was correct and proper. The wife is expected to care for payments. This is because money is considered unclean—unfit to be touched by masculine fingers.

• • •

Sanitation in Japan, except in some hotels and larger shops, is exactly that of the north Alabama mountains. Even in cities the sewers are open and run beside the main thoroughfares.

• • •

It's almost impossible in Japan for foreigners to obtain what the smart woman wears when lunching at the Ritz. Stockings, gloves, hats, shoes and lingerie are imported from France. The duty is exorbitant.

The greatest difficulty, I'm authoritatively informed, is in getting hose you love to touch. The Japanese own millions of educated silkworms; yet they never manufacture decent silk stockings. There is virtually no demand for them. Japanese ladies don't wear

stockings. I've seen little American girls almost weep as they exhibited the scrubbiest kind of hose—all fuzzy and with tiny black lumps splotching the natural symmetry.

A foreign woman who wants good hose, yet who doesn't want to pay the duty, sometimes goes to Yokohama and there meets the incoming liners. On board she buys hose from the stewardesses—who have prepared for such sales by laying in a supply at San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver. One girl told me she met the last ship from America, bought twelve pairs of hose and smuggled them ashore beneath her dress.

* * *

In Japan when a man and woman marry, their friends give them a small pine with two branches, a stuffed crane and a tortoise. The two branches of the pine come together to form one trunk. The crane lives to be one thousand years old. The tortoise lives to be ten thousand years old.

* * *

The word *san* is causing me worry. It means Miss, Mr., or Mrs. You use it whenever addressing any one, regardless of the person's age, sex, or social position.

In accordance with Japanese politeness, a man never calls a waiter or steward merely by the name of his profession. Instead, the servant is called *Boy San,* "Mr. Boy" . . . "Boy" is the name given male serv-

ants in all parts of the Orient. A "Boy" may be eight years old. He may be eighty.

In the dining room the waiter, who's standing beside your chair sucking the loud bassoon on his teeth (sucking the teeth in Japan is a sign of humility and politeness), is addressed: "Boy San, some sliced peaches."

At the time you retire, you ring for Boots. Within half an hour he may appear; you say, "Boy San, please clean my shoes."

Recently I thought Japanese courtesy strained a trifle. I complimented a father upon the beauty of his six-months-old baby girl. He answered: "Yes, she is very beautiful, is my Baby San."

Later I found I was mistaken. The Japanese always speak of "Miss Baby" or "Mr. Baby."

* * *

Each night-watchman in Japan continually makes a peculiar noise distinctive to himself. Natives declare the sounds are made to let patrons know their property is being protected. Foreigners declare the watchmen are proclaiming approach to avoid encounter with robbers.

In Tokyo one watchman marches about all night clanking a steel ring against a steel bar. Another bangs two bamboo poles together. A third keeps up a clatter upon a small drum. Furthermore, each man carries a painted paper lantern—a "Japanese lantern."

These lanterns are carried by Japanese policemen.

At night the policemen go about, impressive in their dignity, their swords swaggering at their sides, while from their arms hang lighted lanterns upon which are painted babies playing with kittens, or boys flying kites, or cascades of flowers, or old men drinking tea.

. . .

Upon the streets of any Japanese city are dozens of eel restaurants. Before each sits a small boy with a wooden block in front of him, a bucket of dwarf eels at his side.

A customer comes along and selects one. The boy catches the chosen eel and holds him on the block. He hacks off half the slippery head, rips open the body and hands the still writhing eel to an old crone who hovers over a charcoal fire. She partly cooks it, and passes it, along with a bowl of rice, to the customer. Several times I've seen the teeth of the diner quiet the final wiggle of the eel.

. . .

Because of the frail structure and the internal cleanliness of Japanese houses, a dog is never allowed inside. Fido is forced, winter and summer, to remain in the open. Possibly that's why so few dogs are seen in Japan.

The cat is admitted within the house.

This has nothing to do with anything, but Japanese babies when asked what the duck says, reply, "Ga-ga." Their imitation of the dog's bark is "Wong-wong."

There's an international infantile agreement about the "Meow" of poor pussy.

. . .

Bird shops are surprisingly common in Japan. Everywhere one sees them. Outside, the cages are hung from wires and poles. Inside, they dangle from the ceiling and are fitted into small openings in the wall. One can buy any kind of bird imaginable, from shy love birds to great, brilliantly-feathered birds with gawking cries.

Another business, somewhat similar to bird selling, is that of the insect peddler. This man pushes a cart upon which are tiny cages containing singing insects. To get near his cart is to hear a chorus of strange sounds. Natives buy the insects and care for them as pets.

. . .

Public libraries in Japan are more popular and are used more than I had expected. The equipment is poor and the number of volumes small, but the reading rooms commonly are filled and statistics show an increasing use of the privileges.

To study for a day in the public library one pays two and one half cents. If one wants a chair in a room exceptionally quiet, he pays one and one half cents additional.

I'm unhappy in Japanese libraries. I can't tell whether a book is a history of Shintoism or the latest

novel. For that reason I usually go from Tokyo libraries to the Jimbo Cho, a street lined on both sides with bookshops.

My first visit was merely to see. I hardly expected to discover anything for my own shelves. I was pleasantly mistaken; in the shops of the Jimbo Cho I've found several desirable volumes. I'll send them home by the next mail ship.

The bookshops, like most other Japanese shops, are small, having only a fifteen- or twenty-foot frontage. The depth usually is the same. Shelves extend from the floor to the ceiling. In all larger shops are sections where foreign books are exhibited. In these foreign sections are three times as many books in German as in all other languages combined.

After searching several afternoons I bought a dozen books. There was an exceptionally good edition of *Tophet and Eden;* Whistler's *Baronet and the Butterfly*—which I can't send home but will have to smuggle in; Stevenson's essay on Walt Whitman, published by the Roycrofters—it isn't rare, I know, but I've never picked up a copy before; *The Queen of the Pirate Isle,* by Bret Harte, illustrated by Kate Greenaway; Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation,* a book I've looked for high and low; and the prize is a superb copy of John Donne's *Juvenilia.* How Donne got to Tokyo I can't imagine, but I know he's going to Alabama in my traveling bag; I wouldn't dare trust such a treasure to the mails.

The children in the bookshops gave me especial pleasure. Boys and girls, some of them so tiny they're forced to rise on tiptoe, crowd about the stalls and solemnly turn precious pages. I watched them—not one mistreated or harmed a book in any manner. Probably that's why the shopkeepers are so kind, why they never drive children from even the most expensive volumes.

Along the Jimbo Cho are the shops selling Japanese prints. I landed in the country, as you know, eager to get to the home market of Japanese prints. I found the cupboard bare.

It's almost impossible to make a pick-up. For fine prints by known artists I was asked as much as I've paid in London, Paris or New York. The dealers shrugged their shoulders to my questioning. They declared the supply of authentic old prints was limited. They refused to sacrifice the few in their shops. I've heard it reported that Japanese dealers fix their prices by the prices paid in European and American markets. I've bought a few prints, but only a few—my purse couldn't stand many.

* * *

Japanese babies are carried on their mothers' backs, held there by criss-crossing a long sash. Mother goes shopping with baby—strangely familiar because of his startling resemblance to a Japanese doll—with baby blinking and nodding in his curious cradle. Nor is father too dignified to carry the wee fellow. But

the real nursing duties are borne chiefly by brother and sister.

Baby often sleeps while his little nurse, not much larger than her burden, wanders along, staring into shops or squatting with a group of friends busy at a game of "paper, scissors and stones." Some of the children race about in a manner to cause fear that baby will come tumbling out. But I've never seen it happen, and, despite the tumult and the shouting, the slumberer ordinarily remains asleep.

* * *

The Japanese Government maintains the strictest censorship on all news published in the daily newspapers.

Not long ago there was an attempt on the life of a member of the royal family. At that particular time the Government thought the report had best be suppressed. It was not given out until one month after the assault had been made.

It is not uncommon for editors and reporters to be jailed for willful disobedience or for indiscretion. I've talked with several American newspapermen who have been in prison for failing to comply exactly with regulations of national censorship.

"A writer can say what he likes," one man declared, "so long as he likes to say what the Government wants. What we write inside the country and what we cable out is severely censored. Half the time we can't get the truth on the wires or in the cables.

"The Emperor must always be spoken of with reverence. There must be an incessant glorification of the army, navy and the country in general. Anything at all derogatory to Japan must be covered up. That's the whole plan of the censorship—cover up, cover up.

"We get into so much trouble with the censors, and for this we're arrested so often that we carry a jail editor on the staff. Whenever the censor sends the police to arrest us, we turn this poor devil over to them. He serves the sentence for the paper. It's a common practice."

* * *

Chiku sho is considered one of the vilest expressions in Japanese. It means "thou brute," or "Thou hairy ape." *Konzaro* is just about as bad. It means "Thou blockhead."

If a Japanese wants to be especially insulting he calls his enemy *Bakayagoaro.* That's pretty awful, but its abbreviation, *Baka,* is worse. Both mean "Thou foolish man." If you use either you must smile.

The final fighting word of Japan is none of these. The ultimate insult is when one person says to another: "I'll cut your liver out and send it to sea in a little boat."

* * *

An astounding amount of construction is going on in Japan. It's true that rehabilitation necessary after

the earthquake of 1923 is partly responsible, but the chief cause is the amazing development throughout the country.

A governmental restriction forbids Japanese structures soaring to the skies, but her civic and office buildings of five and six stories compare favorably with the best in New York or London.

In Tokyo I watched three steel-frame buildings being built—American steel and concrete withstood the Great Earthquake, and Japanese builders are now favoring those materials. At two of the structures steam drivers were hammering; the third retained the ancient use of human power.

On one end of a great rope swung the weight; on the other strained twenty little women. These women, who work stripped to the waist, have a monopoly on pile driving. They are four feet in height and each wears a blue towel tied about her head. Where they originally came from no one knows. They pull in unison, and chant as they swing.

American steel and concrete!

Miniature women, naked to the waist, straining at great weights!

Japan!

XV

THE peninsula of Korea juts out, thumblike, in a southeasterly direction from Manchuria. Its northernmost corner touches Siberia. Japan, like an island Cerberus, crouches at the ocean entrance of the country.

A nation of little wealth and few natural resources, Korea had no possible chance permanently to maintain its independence. China, Russia and Japan through centuries have tried every plan, diplomatic and martial, to annex Korea. It was in 1910 that Japan finally succeeded. The hellish bitterness in Korea at present is partly owing to that annexation; basically it is an intensification of hatred which for centuries has existed between Koreans and Japanese.

Through the ages a fear of Japan has been bred into children of Korea. They still are suckled upon a loathing of their ancient enemy. As they grow to manhood they are tormented by hearing old men recite tales of invasions. They are goaded by reports of violent deaths suffered by their ancestors. "Massacred" is the word they hear.

Repeatedly they are told of a certain mound that this minute exists in Japan. It is called "The Mound of Ears." Beneath it are said to be buried two hundred thousand ears. They were cut from the heads

of slain Koreans. These trophies, so the story goes, were collected by raiding Japanese soldiers and by them taken to Japan. There they were tossed into a pit and a mound of earth was built upon them. Korean patriots frequently twist that knife in the national side.

Because of Japanese disdain and Korean detestation there is constant strife between leaders of the two nations. At times the enmity does not confine itself to invective. As late as 1919 there was a serious Korean demonstration against the Japanese overlords. The rebellion was quickly ended with club and steel.

To-day the old men comb their beards and say, "There will be trouble. There will be trouble. Koreans will not always grovel before Japan." And young men, if they are certain they are not overheard, make even more definite predictions: they declare the time is near when the conqueror will be driven into the sea.

But after one counts soldiers and armaments, after one considers the two national temperaments, one is forced to believe that the talk of the fathers is but the spoken dreaming of old men, and the boasting of youth is merely the rattle of tongues prompted by heroic desire and untempered by an understanding of facts.

For in the 1910 treaty of annexation Korea gave up every semblance of power and national individuality. Japan saw to that. It was stated: "The Emperor of Korea to make complete and permanent cession to the Emperor of Japan of all rights of sovereignty over the

whole of Korea. . . . In consequence of the said annexation, the government of Japan will assume the entire government and administration."

With such a grip on the national throat Japan can be trusted to take proper care that Korea, so long as unaided by other nations, will never become a threat. Each year fewer Korean patriots rear their heads against Japan—Japan knows exceptionally well how to dispose of such heads.

When one thinks of his own country and of national identity, his sympathies probably are with Korea. For Korea is a nation completely bullied by another nation. Its international standing is gone. Its voice in its own government is no more than the wind sighing on Diamond Mountain.

Koreans see beloved traditions cast aside by their masters. On the streets, Japanese policemen interpret the laws. The telephone directory of the national capital is printed in Japanese characters only. The name of the country is being changed from Korea to the older form—Chosen. And Seoul, the capital, officially is Keijo.

Foreign dictation quickly lights fire in the breast of any man. But the flame is fed by a traditional enthusiasm for liberty. Perhaps the burning would seem less if one considered international relations as they are in reality, not as they exist in the minds of idealists. If we deflate the speech of diplomats, disregard the impractical passion of theorists, we can then under-

stand that in a world where national self-preservation is paramount Japan had to annex Korea.

China, at present, is ruptured—but that is only at present. Russia has never forgotten Port Arthur. Japan knows this. She knows, too, that Korea abhors her. Furthermore, she is aware that if either China or Russia wished to attack, they would probably send their land forces through Korea.

Japan is only a few hours from the chief Korean port, from the mainland of Asia. Airplanes and faster ships are constantly lessening the time needed for transit. Indeed, scientists declare the channel separating Japan and Korea to be so shallow that a violent earthquake might at any minute cause an upheaval great enough to join Japan to the continent.

The Mikado must protect his actual fireside. And there must be more protection than is given by a moat that might in an instant be obliterated—obliterated so that hostile armies could march dryshod upon him. The Mikado must have a buffer state. Korea is obvious.

For reasons other than military, Korea is necessary to Japan. The Japanese birthrate is appalling. Almost a million a year. The little island can't stand such population pressure much longer. She must expand.

She can't go to the north; her people can't endure a cold climate. She can't go to the south; Britain and the United States block her. To the east lies the Pacific ocean. She must move westward. Korea is

inevitable and Korea is nearest and cheapest. Besides, Korea is the entering wedge. It is the wedge Japan intends to drive deep into the continent of Asia—Manchuria is her next desired territory.

Japan is a small country. In the council of nations she, at present, is rated of more importance than her economic and natural resources justify. In order to maintain her world position Japan must go outside her borders. The possession of Korea is essential.

Sentimentalists may sympathize with the Koreans, yet no honest American, so long as there is Haiti and Nicarauga and Hawaii and the Philippines, and no honest Englishman, so long as there is Ireland and India and Egypt and the rest of the far-flung battle line, can honorably offer one word in criticism of Japan or her policy.

XVI

WHEN last I wrote you, I was on the boat sailing through the Inland Sea of Japan. That's a gorgeous trip, Annette; all the beauty of a Swiss lake heightened by the fascination—and there is a fascination, a strange repulsive attraction—of the Orient. There was a young moon, and I watched it rise. By it I began to swear my love, but, remembering its inconstancy, I went below.

In the morning I had a look at Shimonoseki and saw almost nothing. So I planned to catch the night boat for Fusan, the port at which one enters Korea. In the evening while waiting for the steamer to complete its loading, I was wandering about the dock and breathing a bit of the midnight air. A pompous young Japanese gentleman came to me.

"American?" he asked.

"Yes."

"New York?"

"No."

"How long you be Japan?"

"About three months."

"Where you go from here?"

"Korea."

"Why?"

"I'm just traveling."

"Why you travel?"

I thought the fellow had considerable nerve, but there was no use offending him. I explained I was merely jaunting about a bit.

"You travel alone?"

"Yes."

"Have you girl with you?"

That I thought none of his business and told him so. He went away. Five minutes later he returned. He was accompanied by three other men.

"Come with us," he said.

"Why should I go with you?"

"We"—and their chests swelled—"we police."

"But what do you want with me?"

"Come with us."

"The boat sails in ten minutes. What do you want? Do you want to see my passport?"

"Come with us."

"All right, my bonnie lads, I'll go with you; but if I miss that boat I shall be very much annoyed—if that happens to make any difference to you."

They marched me along the quay and into a small room where two other men were sitting. For a moment they spoke in Japanese. The commandant sat very erect behind his little desk. He addressed me through an interpreter. They asked me who I was, what I was and why. I told them. They asked for my papers. I delivered them. They pounced on the things and asked me to move under the light. I did it. They compared my face with the passport photograph.

I was beginning to wonder if I had committed some crime. Then the searchers came upon a railway pass given me as a friendly gesture by the International Railways of Japan. Instantly they began to suck their teeth and bow and apologize and offer me every excuse. They bundled up my papers and returned them. Afterward, the police, even the station commandant, accompanied me back to the boat.

A dozen times I asked why they had searched, who they had suspected me of being. I could learn nothing from them. As the ship cast off her shore lines they stood upon the dock and bowed me farewell.

It was later in the smoking room, where one of the ship's officers came for a smoke and a talk, that I learned a young American was wanted. He, it seems, lives in Shanghai, but he makes a yearly pilgrimage to Japan for the purpose of buying a fresh virgin. That's all right, quite all right. No one objects to his buying as many virgins as he can afford. He pays the average market price of three hundred to five hundred dollars and, at those figures, no one can criticize the transactions. But he keeps them only one year, then kicks them out on the streets. Two had been to the Japanese consul in Shanghai. The consul had been forced to pay their return passage to Japan. That was why the Government was grumbling.

The American had been told that he could visit Japan as much as he liked, but that the girl market was closed to him. Officials knew he had entered Japan. It had been reported he was leaving by way

of Korea. They wanted to make sure he didn't smuggle out a virgin. The police had mistaken me for him. They thought I'd violated the Japanese version of the Mann Act.

. . .

I've been here in Korea almost two weeks. Twice I've traveled outside Seoul, the capital. I went to look at the country. I don't think I'll do it again. I had to sleep in village inns and I'm still scratching mementos of those ghastly nights. I'm planning to stay in Seoul only a few more days. In fact, I couldn't make myself stay in Seoul many more days. The smell of this place is enough to stifle the nostrils of the gods in heaven, even at the moment they bury their noses in beakers of ambrosia. All the incense ever burned couldn't compensate them for the odors drifting up from the streets of Seoul.

I've had an interesting time since being here, but I don't like Seoul. It's true that a number of persons have been very kind to me and I've seen—oh, listen, *chérie,* I must tell you something.

The boat coming across from Japan docks at Fusan a few minutes before eight o'clock. One goes to a small hotel for breakfast. Afterward he wanders through the town, then returns to the station for the morning express to Seoul.

On the day I traveled, the train was filled with the usual run of passengers: Japanese in plenty, a few Koreans, a dozen Chinamen and three white men.

KOREA

There was one person noticeable above all the others.

He was taller than the average Korean. He carried himself erect as a young pine. There was no curve at his abdomen, though the years had snowed white hairs on him and one knew he had completed the natural span. His beard was white and misty. His fingers were forever busy, either raking his beard or rubbing one of the cigars he kept incessantly burning. He wore a suit of white ducks, cut European style. His hat was a Panama. His shoes were white. They had rubber soles. His wife, full and broad she was, was dressed in the native costume of the Korean woman. The little boy with them was arrayed in blue coat, blue trousers and blue cap, the common dress in Japanese schools.

The old man talked with his wife in Korean. He spoke to the conductor of the train in Japanese. He translated for an European traveler and for a time talked in Parisian French. An hour later I went to the front of the car. When I returned, my chair had been taken. But the seat by the old man was vacant. I sat there and began to read. Once, when I glanced up, I saw him looking at my book.

"You are fond of Dickens?" he asked, speaking English.

"Yes—particularly fond of Pickwick," I added, and held out the book for his inspection.

He accepted it, carefully guarded the place, but did not open the volume. "It is one of the great books,"

he said. "I first read it when I was about your age. When last I read it—" He glanced out of the window, then spoke in a slightly lower voice, the words distinct, separate. "When last I read it, I was living in London."

"You lived in London! Did you like it?"

"London is very dear to me, though not so dear as your Washington." He drew a great breath from his cigar. As he spoke the smoke came tumbling out. "Washington I love next to my own Seoul."

All that morning we talked. We lunched on the train at the same table. I was presented to his wife. His young grandson was presented to me. Afterward neither the wife nor the boy spoke. The old man talked and I listened, occasionally urging him on with a question. Before the day was ended I felt as if innumerable curtains had been parted, as if strange, glamorous vistas had opened to lure me.

As a young man he had studied in his own country, later at Cambridge, at Heidelberg and at the Sorbonne. In middle age he had served Korea at Washington, at London and at the court of the Mikado. While he spoke in his soft, slow voice, the pleasant trace of an Oriental guttural about his speech, I felt as if the soul of Korea was whispering to me.

He talked of centuries ago when his country's sword was keen. He talked of decades ago when his country's soul was free. He spoke in reverence of the Korean emperor. And gall spilled over his lips as he recounted the Japanese annexation.

"But I am an old man," he said, "a very old man. I and my generation will take our country into the grave with us. The younger generation will forget—forget." For a moment he was silent, then his fingers locked and I saw his wrist muscles leap from their bed. "Must forget," he said, "or be strangled. Even I," he went on, "I send my grandson to school in Japan. What is that about the old order passing—do you remember?"

So we smoked and talked. I felt drunk with listening to him. Then the day was over and in darkness the train entered the station at Seoul. The old man drew out his card case. He handed me his card. I gave him one of mine. The name upon his card was "Sung Ha Lee."

"I can't begin to tell you, Mr. Lee, how—"

"My name is Sung—Mr. Sung," he said. "We of the Orient are backwards from you in America. "Or," and he smiled with a great indulgence, a great understanding, "or," he repeated, "it is perhaps that you in America are backwards."

The train swirled into the station and came to its stop. Porters struggled into every compartment, and snatched at pieces of luggage. The old man and I shook hands. I bowed to his wife and the grandson bowed to me. We all stepped from the train together. As we did, it seemed that half the persons in the station bowed and bowed and bowed again. The old man nodded and waved his hand.

"My sons and daughters, my grandsons and granddaughters and their children," he explained. "I have been away three days."

Once more he shook hands with me, then we parted. He walked through the midst of his sixty sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and their children. He did not look upon them individually and they remained in deep bow until he passed. At the entrance of the station he stepped into his car and was driven away, raising his hat to me as he turned the corner.

Naturally I was delighted by my good luck. You may believe I would have traveled far to meet and talk with such a man. That evening at the hotel I was very pleased with my fortune. The next morning I told myself that my trip to Korea was justified merely because I had met Mr. Sung.

And then in the afternoon I was sitting by my window finishing a pipe and watching the people go by. I saw a small procession approaching. In front walked a man dressed in cleanest white garments. He bore a small tray. Behind him, in pairs, came six others. I watched them turn from the street into the courtyard of the hotel. They disappeared into the entrance. I, of course, thought no more about it. But a moment later my telephone rang and a hotel servant announced that Mr. Sung was calling. As quickly as I could I brushed my hair and straightened my tie and descended.

In the lobby the seven men I had seen in procession

awaited me. The leader came forward and bowed. He said something in Korean. Then he held out his tray to me. On it was Mr. Sung's card. I accepted it and bowed. All the servants bowed very low and withdrew.

That left me with considerable worry. What should I do about it? I had no idea. In Europe I should have known, but the etiquette of the Orient was strange to me. Should I hire seven men and let them take my card out to Mr. Sung? Should I take it myself? I didn't know what to do.

Finally I decided to ask some questions. I looked through my letters of introduction and elected to call on an American trade representative in the city. He graciously explained my next move.

And so that afternoon I arrayed myself in my best and called on Mr. Sung. Four servants bowed to me at the entrance of his home, an European home palatial as the old mansions of London. Four other servants escorted me to the room where I was to be received. As the door opened, Mr. Sung rose and bowed exceedingly low. He led me to my chair and waited until I sat. Then he sat.

For a time we talked. How did I like Seoul? Were there any particular sights I would care to see? I thought the dress of Korean gentlemen especially interesting? Perhaps I would be willing to accept an entire costume? Oh, but it would be nothing. Mr. Sung's servants would prepare it and deliver it at the hotel. Was I comfortable at the hotel? Would I so

honor his home as to come live there? Perhaps I was wise. A traveler had best always live in hotels. When was I going to Washington?

"I still retain my home there. That is the picture of the house. I, at least, can look at the picture, though probably I shall never get back to my home in Washington."

Upon the walls were paintings and photographs of many gatherings. Men in uniforms stood or sat around tables. A number of the photographs were of Mr. Sung. In some he wore court dress, in some he wore the daily costume of his country, in others he was *en déshabillé*.

The servants brought tea and cakes and little candies. We drank tea and talked and the old man raked his beard. Afterward we smoked and he told me of humorous little happenings during his life as ambassador to Washington and to London. There was no humor, no smile, as he spoke of the court of the Mikado.

When I came to leave, Mr. Sung himself escorted me to the door of his home. My rickshaw had been dismissed. A footman opened the door of an expensive American automobile.

As I rode back to the hotel I suddenly recalled that I had not seen Mrs. Sung. Despite her years in Europe and in America, despite her innumerable sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and their children, Mrs. Sung was still a woman of the Orient, still to be kept in her own apartments.

After my visit I counted my relation with Mr. Sung as delightfully ended. I knew that before I left I should, of course, call for a moment to offer my farewells, but I thought our momentary friendship was now to be merely a memory.

I was mistaken, for two days later the seven servants again called upon me. They delivered an entire costume of the Korean gentleman. The hat, the top-coat, the under coat, the shoes and socks—all were there. Immediately I wrote Mr. Sung my thanks. I dispatched the message by a hotel runner.

Then came the next afternoon and, *chérie,* I hate to tell you what happened the next afternoon. I was in my dressing gown and was lying back in a big easy-chair reading. My shirt collar was open, my hair scarcely combed and the room filled with tobacco smoke. The telephone rang.

"Mr. Sung is calling," said the desk clerk.

I supposed that "Mr. Sung" was really Mr. Sung's seven servants, just as he had been before. I didn't want to trouble to make myself presentable; I told the clerk to let him come up. A few moments later there was a timid knock on the door.

"Come in," I called.

The door opened and, Annette, I have never been so embarrassed. It was Sung himself—and I hadn't risen from my chair. I just sat there in rudeness and misery. The old man bowed.

"Good afternoon," he said. "You are busy? Do I intrude?"

I ask you—what could I say? I stammered, and I know my face was scarlet. I started to make an excuse. I started to explain. I started a score of sentences. Each time I became only more and more confused. Finally I decided to confess it all. I told him exactly how everything had happened.

The old fellow laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. When I admitted I had thought of hiring seven servants to take my card out to him, he held his sides. I just adored him. One minute he had me in a most embarrassing position; the next he caused me to feel we were college mates meeting at a reunion.

After I finished my story and he had quieted down, he insisted I dress and come for a walk about town with him. I shall never forget that walk. Men and women everywhere bowed to the venerable old fellow. He chatted and answered my questions. And, bless his heart, ever so often he would chuckle and say: "Why didn't you send out those seven servants? Why didn't you send them?"

I began this letter to tell you something about Korea. I've told you nothing. I'm sorry. But once I started on old Sung I couldn't stop. He has been wonderful to me—has had me out to his home three times, and has sent his chauffeur to take me to ride every other day since I've been here.

I tell you what I'll do, Annette—I'll write some in my journal and then send the pages to you. I've been very slack about that journal.

XVII

THE Korean, even of the lower middle class, is an exceedingly proud fellow. He is bitterly resentful of all that could be interpreted as foreign condescension.

One morning soon after I arrived in Seoul I was taking pictures. In a side street I photographed some rickshaws. Afterward I took a picture of some women washing clothes. A gentleman in native dress posed for me. Every one on the street stood and laughed as if it were all great fun.

But when I attempted to focus my camera on a woman who was little more than a mass of sores slightly covered with filthy rags, there was a howl from those about me. A young man sprang in front of the old woman and turned his back to my camera. I moved to one side to take the picture from a different angle. A second young man caught my arm and jerked me around. The crowd gathered.

An automobile passed, then stopped and backed up. An Englishman stepped out and spoke to the people in Korean. They seemed wildly excited and repeatedly pointed to me and to the woman.

"They don't want her photographed," the gentleman explained. "They're afraid you'll return to America and say she's a typical example of Korean

womanhood. I wouldn't try it if I were you. They're pleasant enough so long as they're not ruffled, but a little thing can set them off and they easily get nasty."

I asked him to express my regrets to the crowd, to explain that I hadn't understood, and that I fully agreed with their attitude. As soon as he had interpreted, the natives began to laugh and talk again. Two small boys posed for their pictures while their mother blinked and nodded. As I went away I raised my hat and bowed. Every one answered with ceremonial courtesy.

• • •

For days I had heard boys and young men whistling the thing. With the crowds that forever stand in front of radio shops I had four times heard it broadcast. Each time the listeners had joined in the chorus. It had really a jolly swing, this bit of Asiatic jazz by some Oriental Irving Berlin. I was keen on getting a copy of the sheet music.

The clerks in the first music store received me with such gusto I forgot the tune. Try as I would I couldn't remember. Three times I thought I had it and I whistled a few notes. They were wrong. Every one peered at me politely. I stood blinking; then bowed and stumbled out.

Once in the open, I remembered. I walked around the square twice while I practiced. I went back into the shop, whistling as I entered. The clerks recognized it and laughed and rubbed their hands. But

they had sold out. They gestured that there had been a run on the piece and their supply was gone. They told me the name and, I suppose, wished me well in finding it. The name, of course, I didn't remember beyond the doorstep.

In the next shop I whistled my tune, but again received a negative answer. I whistled all over Seoul before I found a copy. The man who sold it to me spoke English. He said that the piece had been written by a native Korean. He said that it had just won a prize for being the best example of "American music"—that was why it was so popular.

Despite the melody being strongly mindful of "Piccolo Pete," I have found it persistent; so persistent that I bought a mouth-harp and now periodically forsake my pipe to play this prize-winning piece of Korean jazz. I play it especially for the little serving wenches who prepare vegetables and do odd chores beneath my window here at the hotel. Apparently they enjoy my serenade, for yesterday morning one of them looked up and bowed. Later when I was rendering "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," one of them smiled. This afternoon I'll try my luck with "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover."

* * *

Yesterday I saw a woman die. The experience was not pleasant.

A stiff rain was driving down. Only a few persons were on the street. Two children across the road

stared into a doorway. I noticed a pair of legs protruding. They were twisted at unnatural angles. I went over and saw a woman lying on her back. She was gasping. Frothy saliva oozed from the corners of her mouth to slide along her cheeks and on down her throat. Her face was slate gray.

I ran next door and signaled to two men to come out. They were playing the Korean equivalent of checkers. They shook their heads and pointed to their game. I insisted they come out. They wouldn't. I caught the smaller by his arm and dragged him to the door. I pointed to the woman and made signs as if using the telephone. Then I felt my pulse and thereby told him to call a doctor. He shrugged his shoulders and went back into his shop.

A small crowd had gathered. No one made a move to assist the woman. No one did anything. I ran to the corner and called a policeman. He swaggered along behind me with infinite leisure. When he saw the woman he merely looked on with the rest of the crowd. I again signaled the telephone. He studied me as if I were a complete lunatic.

A boy came and lifted the woman to a sitting position. He gazed at her a moment, shook his head and released his grip. She flopped over backward and lay sprawled once more.

A girl hurried up and caught the woman by the neck. The girl pounded and shoved on the poor creature's stomach and abdomen. Each shove was answered by the breath rasping through the woman's throat. The

air was followed by an increased spilling of saliva.

All the time I listened for the ambulance. No ambulance came. A crowd had gathered. Except the girl, no one did anything. Every one else laughed. Apparently it was a pleasing joke.

A white man came. Surely he would do something. He asked a few questions, then shook his head. He told me he had been a missionary in Korea for twenty-five years. He explained that the girl was the daughter-in-law of the dying woman. He offered a taxi to take them to the hospital. The offer was refused. He said nothing could be done; the natives would not tolerate outside interference.

Finally two rickshaw men were called. For seven minutes they argued with the daughter-in-law. They haggled about the fare. The missionary explained to me that the difference between the price asked and the price offered was about three cents in American money. It was while the argument was in high progress that the woman gagged twice, the saliva became flecked with scarlet, the breath rattled through her throat. She breathed no more.

Three minutes later a bargain was struck. The daughter-in-law climbed into one rickshaw. The corpse was loaded into the other. There it sat, wedged on the floor, its head rolling and bumping about, its limp legs dangling loose over the dashboard and kicking the back of the rickshaw man as he trotted.

American movie stars are popular in Korea. All picture shops have photographs of Laura La Plant, Constance Talmadge and Joan Bennett—the blondes. Gentlemen and Koreans.

One evening I went to the theatre with an American girl who is a blonde. Every one stared and politely pointed at her hair. One child asked if she might touch it. Western women sometimes are asked to take off their hats so that natives can see hair other than the invariable black of their country.

* * *

Extract from the eminent Seoul *Press,* the journalistic star of the East: "Regular meeting of the Seoul Rotary Club at the Bankers' Club at 12:30 P.M."

* * *

The smells of Seoul are amazing in their diversity and painful in their potency. It is impossible for Westerners to understand how natives ignore odors strong enough to gag persons unaccustomed to their power.

Through the center of Seoul runs a small stream about fifteen feet wide. This is the public sewer. Its smell is stifling. Yet I've seen boys playing and swimming in it. Just below where the lads swam, their mothers and sisters did the family washing.

Near some of the public eating houses, all of which are in the open, this stream goes its distressing way. It is difficult to understand how one fails to be actively

sick at even the thought of food. Yet the native squats over his bowl of rice, audibly eats, and smacks his lips.

In the very narrow streets iron carts frequently pass. They leave a stench oppressive in its foulness. Sometimes the lids of these carts are not properly screwed down. Often there is a splashing over the top and out into the road. The native steps to one side—that's all. He doesn't appear to be annoyed.

Men who have lived in the East for years declare it's all a matter of education. They vow that sooner or later one becomes accustomed to the smells. That may be true, but I've been in Seoul only a fortnight. Once off the main street I find it more pleasant for me to smoke without ceasing.

* * *

Korean boys are very fond of baseball. In the streets they play catch; in open spaces they play one-eyed-cat. One gang has quite taken me in; made me a member of the club, I think, though I admit I haven't the details absolutely straight and heaven knows I don't know the password. While playing with them three days ago I proved how ephemeral is the training of parent and parson, how strong the instinct of self-preservation.

On my second trip to the plate I caught one on the nose and sent it over the little hedge. It went into the street and banged upon the top of a passing rick-

shaw. Not a word was spoken, but as one man and a gang of small boys we raced down a side street, cleared a fence and hid behind a silversmith's shop.

For several minutes we squatted there, the youngsters' quick eyes darting in every direction while they bridled their breaths the better to hear. After a sufficient time a scout was sent out. He reported that the row had subsided and that the rickshaw man had gone away—but he had carried the ball with him. I think I was elected president when I gestured that I would buy a new ball. After a bat and mask were added they voted me life membership.

* * *

Korea is so poverty stricken that many peddlers and keepers of night stalls, which are open along the main street until after midnight, are able to stock only one commodity.

I've seen a man selling only red peppers, shriveled to the size of a lead pencil. Another offered straight pins. He sold them by the dozen. One man retailed the coarse outer leaves of lettuce. The prize, I thought, should have gone to the chap whose entire stock was six moth balls.

Through the early half of the night these men call their wares in a singsong chant. The noise at first sounds like bedlam, then one realizes each man is chanting in a primitive rhythm common to his brotherhood.

* * *

Happy Hooligan's hat is a dignified hat when compared with the national headpiece of Korea. Not even The Great American Tragedy of Mr. Coolidge in his sombrero is comparable to a Korean gentleman in his ordinary street hat.

The Korean arranges his topknot in a little mound upon the center of his head. Then he fits on a skullcap of stiff gauze, a hole in the middle permitting the topknot to protrude. Over this the hat is placed.

It is of black crinoline, stiff as fine wire and heavily lacquered. The crown resembles a cone with the peak sawed off. The brim is no wider than a lady's finger. The hat is much too small to sit on the head unaided. It is held in place by a chin strap of black ribbons or amber beads that hang down in front like a necktie. Against the sun the ensemble is of no value whatever. Gentlemen invariably carry fans to shield themselves against the blistering summer rays.

* * *

Last week in a lonely little bookshop I bought a copy of Joseph Conrad's "The Shadow Line."

Not that I haven't a copy of "The Shadow Line." I have a dozen. I keep them until some friend shows he's ready for this accolade. One by one they disappear.

The particular copy of "The Shadow Line" I bought last week will take its just place beside my treasured first edition. Side by side the two will stand, glorifying my shelves.

Because "The Shadow Line" I bought in Seoul was used as a textbook in a Korean school. There are thumb smudges on the pages. There are pictures, such as a schoolboy would scrawl, on the flyleaf. But best of all, the book is "jacked." Upon the margin the schoolboy has written the Japanese equivalent of Conrad's mighty lines.

* * *

Almost all shops in Korea are owned and operated by Japanese. The energetic natives of Japan have crossed the channel and are exploiting Korea both politically and commercially.

It is unfortunate for the Koreans, but the traveler is thankful. Virtually every comfort, every convenience throughout the land is directly traceable to Japan and her influence. Whatever progress Korea is making, so old American and English residents declare, is being brought about chiefly by the Japanese.

* * *

The Koreans, both men and women, wear clothing of grass-linen. A beautiful whiteness and glaze is imparted to these garments by the Korean method of ironing.

The garment is folded eight or ten times and placed on a wooden or granite block. At night, after all other work is done, two women of the household face each other and carry on the tedious labor. For hours they beat with two pairs of wooden clubs shaped like

small baseball bats. This pounding is done to a rhythm somewhat suggestive of a horse in slow canter.

The washing and ironing of clothes is one of the most important feminine tasks. In winter it becomes especially arduous, for at that time all garments must be taken to pieces before being washed. This is because winter clothing is wadded with cotton. The wadding must be removed, the garment washed, the wadding replaced and the garment sewed anew.

* * *

Above the entrance to a small shop I saw a sign: "English books for sale." I went nearer and saw a second sign: "Korean Christian Literature Society." I went in.

In the section headed "Poetry" were the stories of Sherlock Holmes and "The Sea Wolf," by Sabatini. In fiction I found Mr. Wells' "Outline of History."

While inspecting the books I was approached by the keeper of the shop, a fine-looking native Korean who had been taught by American missionaries. He bowed and said good morning. I spoke to him and went on with my searching. He came close to me.

"Are you Christian?" he asked.

I was so completely caught out I merely blinked.

"I hope you Christian," he said. "We must give up to drink. We must give up to smoke. We must do what Jesus says."

XVIII

DEAR Octavus Roy Cohen: I've been lazy. Just lazy—that's all. I know you understand. I've heard you agree with Sydney Smith: correspondence, even with one's friends, is similar to trousers before braces were invented—hard to keep up.

I've wished for you, of course; wished for you hundreds of times. But never as I long for you at present. I know your love of Paris and of weird little towns scattered over the Continent and Northern Africa. But, Roy, I don't believe there's any city in the world comparable to Harbin, a small town in Manchuria north of Vladivostok and lying in virtually the same latitude as Halifax. No other town could be so glamorous, so horrible. The naked flesh shows gaunt through rents in the tinsel.

Throughout the Orient one hears frequent stories of wild gayety to be enjoyed in Harbin. Harbin is mentioned and men wink at each other. They bunch their fingers to toss kisses to the ceiling.

"It's the most cosmopolitan town in the world," says one.

"It's the Paris of the Orient," declares another.

"Paris!" sneers a third. "Paris isn't in it. One night in Harbin—"

Stories are limitless about the strange life of Har-

bin. According to rumor, nothing has ever happened elsewhere that has not occurred a little more vigorously, a little more passionately, a little more dramatically in Harbin.

Representatives of international business houses seek to be stationed in Harbin. Traveling salesmen anticipate visiting Harbin. Men who have spent years in the Orient raise glasses and drink to their return to Harbin. The Manchurian city is the Mecca of the East for those wishing light gayety or sordid vice.

In Tokyo I heard of Harbin. At the American Club, at the British Club, men talked of Harbin. In Osaka I heard of Harbin. At Nikko I heard of Harbin. On the ship crossing to Korea I heard of Harbin. In Seoul I was asked if I was going to Harbin.

"But why?" I queried again and again. "What makes the place so attractive?"

Answers were indefinite. There were tales of peculiar pleasures and strange amusements, of cabarets and night life. I was winked at and leered at. But when I pressed for facts I was told to go see for myself.

I had no idea of doing so. I had planned to travel from Seoul to Darien and there take ship for China. But one evening in Seoul a friend from Tokyo came into the dining room. For an hour I heard nothing but Harbin. He had just come down from there. When we parted, I went to my room, packed, and caught the night train. I shouldn't have done it. There was a lot I hadn't seen in Korea. But I was tired of Korea. From the beginning it impressed me

as dreary. It suffers, of course, from lying behind the charm of Japan and in the path of China's lure. Yet even after I recognize the disadvantage of its sandwiched position, I still believe Korea comparatively uninteresting.

As I say, I shouldn't have chucked my plans and raced off for a pot of pleasure at the end of an Oriental rainbow. But I did. And instead of gold I've found a scuttle of ashes only slightly smoldering. I expected the fleshly women of Rubens; I've been offered the brutal nudes of Gauguin's. I came to hear the erotic music of "Lohengrin"; I've heard only Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre"—that's it, Roy, the "Danse Macabre." It's here. It plays incessantly. Even as I sleep I hear the rattle of their damned bones. And the cock never crows. There is no dawn.

I came into Harbin after traveling thirty-six hours from Seoul. I arrived at eight o'clock on a damp, chilly morning. I was amazed at the buildings in the town. Harbin is as European as is Leningrad or Prague. The houses are European. The offices and public buildings are European. The banks are European. The streets are macadam and the sidewalks are cement. From all that is inanimate one might think himself wandering through a town of Indiana or Yorkshire. On the main streets almost every one is white, is Russian. Virtually all shops are owned by Russians. Russians drive the taxicabs. Russians operate the hotels. To a transient, Harbin is entirely a Russian city, a city where the Chinaman is the out-

sider. Yet Harbin is a city in Manchuria. It is owned and governed by Chinese.

This unnatural and unhealthy condition was started by the great exodus from Russia immediately after the fall of the Czar. It has been intensified by the continuous emigration of "White" Russians, as those opposed to the Red régime are called. These men and women fled through Siberia. After crossing the boundary they made for the nearest town. Harbin grew to be a great center of refugees.

There was a time, during the years after the War, when most supplies entering eastern Russia passed through Harbin. Then the town was prosperous. But different routes of ingress have been opened. Harbin no longer receives the money which once poured in with an abundance encouraging to unstinted spending.

At present the city is poor. Thronging the streets are thousands of men and women who feed and clothe themselves with little more than their noble self-respect, their glorious determination not to break beneath the bitterness that tears at their souls.

The world has learned to discount tales of wealthy Russians thrust from their heritage and released as paupers upon society. Undoubtedly some of the old nobility at present are hungry and ragged, but in the total suffering of exiled Russians they rightly sink into their places as a few individuals among thousands.

The stories of Russian generals and Russian dukes in Harbin have not greatly interested me. Instead,

I think chiefly of the men who in Russia once made honest and adequate livings, but who now in a Chinese city lack the essentials of life. It is the suffering of the plodding middle-class Russian that is more deeply dramatic than the spectacular descent of the nobleman.

On the streets of Harbin the great mass of Russians divide themselves into four distinct classes. The two extremes are of small interest. The exceeding few who are well clothed and well fed are no different from the successful in any other city. Neither are the swarming beggars unusual. But the two middle groups hold a great fascination.

In the upper of the two is the man or woman still fighting—unwilling to bow down despite the daily draught of gall. One sees them everywhere. Their clothes are of good material, though the coat is shiny and here and there a seam is neatly darned. The shoes may once have been cracked, but one must look a second time before detecting the patch. The hair has been cut at home and the lines are jagged. The shirt is of cheapest material, but it's clean. And so he or she goes rapidly about a meager business, hoping that a continuous activity may breed a partial forgetfulness.

The last group of the four is composed of those who are beaten, know it and have given in. The slight break at the elbow is undarned. The shoes are crusted with the mud of yesterdays. The collar of the shirt is dirty. But it's their eyes which tell the

story. I'll never rid my brain of their eyes—their lusterless eyes staring blankly into the gloom of the days ahead. He and she are only a few more hungry hours from the extended hand—or the revolver.

In such a town Westerners go for their pleasures! Harbin is the center of hilarity in the Orient!

I'd as soon banquet in a mausoleum, feast in a charnel-house.

There are a dozen cabarets in Harbin. My first night here I accompanied two gentlemen on a tour. We went from one place to another, drank vodka, danced, enjoyed ourselves. Enjoyed ourselves! At 3:30 in the morning we entered "Merriment," the center of all Harbin night life.

The food was excellent. The music was good. The floor was large and had been well prepared. The cabaret entertainment deserved no praise, though it was not worse than similar entertainment we have seen in New York. With so much in its favor, "Merriment" should have given us pleasure.

To me the place was ghoulish. "That woman," said one of my friends, pointing to a slender brunette who carried herself like a goddess and who wore a costume of green with a high yellow ruff, the costume of the professional dancing girl, "that woman is the widow of an old army officer." My friend started across to speak with her, but some one else bowed first: she went to his table.

Another woman, delicate and with hair the color of thread gold, was pointed out. "Her husband lost

millions in the break-up. Last summer he cracked with consumption. She's nice, too, and she charges less than the other girls." Later in the morning, just before daybreak, I saw her leave the place in the company of a Chinaman.

I danced with a girl who spoke perfect English. "It's not a question of liking it or not," she answered. "I must live. But I'm better off than some of them. See that dark-haired girl over there. She has three children." In the next tableau the dark-haired girl wore only varied-colored lights which slowly revolved upon her.

Another woman told me she was being allowed to remain until the week was out. The manager had received complaints about her dancing.

"Then what?" I asked.

A wooden laugh dragged itself from her lips. "Don't be silly," she said, "and give me a cigarette."

Of course, Roy, every cabaret the world over is filled with its ghosts, its realities carefully hidden from the money-spender. But in Harbin these ghosts walk in and sit down at the table with you. You hold them in your arms as you dance to the wild music. They stare as lightly you push aside a half-eaten sandwich. What most depresses you is that they do not complain. Silently they go about their ghoulish business.

In Paris frequently, in Vienna, sometimes in New York, occasionally even in London, one is able to forget that the gayety is forced, that the quick laugh is

merely stock in trade. But in the cabarets of Harbin one feels at a death feast—an illusion added to by the eyes of hungry men who peer through the windows.

I want to get out; I want to leave the place. I will as soon as I can.

XIX

I SHOULDN'T be writing to-night, Dad, if I could have bought or bribed a first-class berth on the train going south. I couldn't do either. There was only a second-class berth and I refuse to sleep second-class on a Manchurian railway. I made one futile effort as I came to Harbin. I shall never do it again.

In second-class compartments there are four berths packed sardine fashion. One of my companions was a Chinaman. He insisted on closing the door and stuffing paper in all the cracks. Another Chinaman yowled and yowled until we agreed to burn the bright light in the center of the ceiling. My third companion was a giant Russian. His snore shamed Wagnerian brass at *fortissimo*. Ergo, I refuse to travel second-class again.

Yet for to-night I couldn't get a first-class berth. A Chinese general was traveling. He had chartered the entire first-class sleeping quarters. He was being accompanied by ten of his wives.

That leaves me stuck in Harbin for another night. I've been here a week. It seems a year—probably because of the depressing experiences I've had.

This morning, for example, a man, dressed in ragged clothes and with a face showing that all light

had gone from him, stood on the curb and curled his lip as I approached. He spoke rapidly in Russian, glaring at me as he did. Just as I was opposite him he broke into perfect English.

"You American — — — —," he said, "what are you doing in Harbin?"

I hesitated, then realized nothing could be accomplished by starting a row. I passed on. An hour later I came back by the same corner. The man still was there.

"Having a good time blowing your money?" he called.

"What's the idea?" I asked. "What have I done to you?"

"Nothing, God damn you, nothing. And you better not. But get out of Harbin. We don't want you or your damned countrymen up here. All you do is parade around and show off your clothes and—"

"No difference between my clothes and yours, except that mine are clean."

That was the match in the powder. The fellow seemed to go completely mad. He drew a knife and shouted his oaths. Within a minute a crowd had assembled. How far he would have gone in his threat to mutilate me most intimately, to deprive me of the privilege of being worshiped by descendants, I don't know; but I was very thankful when an Englishman thrust a heavy walking stick into my hand, and more thankful when a Chinese policeman arrived.

The Chinaman came up behind the man with the

knife and fetched him a blow across the head, hitting him with the scabbard of the police sword. Another policeman ran up and the two of them, alternately banging the man with their scabbards, dragged him away to jail. All the while he cursed Americans and swore his revenge.

* * *

It's a subject, Dad, about which every one has talked so often that I hesitate to speak about it even with you. Yet the more one travels, and the more he is away from his own country, the more honestly he tries to weigh and balance the opinions of fanatics on both ends of the international argument.

European countries laugh at American insistence upon modern plumbing; yet, in so far as they are able, they're tagging along. They sneer at our steam-heated houses, but whenever European hotels can afford steam heat they advertise it in their letterheads. They jibe us about our telephones, but they're putting them in as fast as they can raise the money and string the wires.

The longest-haired member of the Greenwich Village intelligentsia will admit America is far ahead in mankind's attempt to minister to bodily comforts. He, though, will probably join Europeans in declaring that we have built a living that is mechanical, that we have destroyed the romance of daily life, that we have displaced the picturesque with the utilitarian.

When one goes into the primitive, into countries which do not have even European substitutes, then, for

CHINESE BEGGARS

the first time, one knows the physical advantages we in America blindly accept each day. These advantages of cleanliness and comfort are so evident that they need only be mentioned to be acclaimed by all—by all save those weary ones who suffer from national ennui and those slightly traveled few who pose as cosmopolites.

The second important group of accusations brought against America and Americans is more reasonable. A dislike for certain national characteristics of our behavior in public is, perhaps, justified.

We, so it is said, are a nation of hand-shaking, back-slapping, loud-talking barbarians. We are uncouth. We have no regard for the privacy of others. We are undignified.

When one thinks in terms of one hundred and twenty million persons, those accusations are probably correct. As a nation we have unpleasant qualities. We sometimes speak louder than is necessary. Occasionally we are boisterous. Often we are boastful. We put our hands on each other with a naïve, yet reprehensible, familiarity. We chew gum. We have women's literary clubs and men who speak at them. We produced Carrie Nation. We permitted Anthony Comstock.

But, comparatively, we are kind. We are humane. We are generous—stupidly so. We are, in the main, honestly trying to flounder through to some scheme by which man can live with man.

In details we often have gone far off on wrong tracks. Thieves and grafters have seen, and are see-

ing, to that. We have made, and are making, colossal blunders. As individuals we have fallen into the curse of meddling with the affairs of other persons. As a nation we have attempted to instill our ideas into our sane and honorable, yet unwilling neighbors. We have set ourselves to be our brother's keeper.

Yet despite all that, despite ten times our obvious faults, we Americans, as a whole, are fed upon the pap of human kindness. As a great and ponderous social organization we are groping for the fundamental truths of friendliness upon which we were suckled.

Do not think that distance and a lack of bathtubs have blinded me to our national faults. Not that. We have tremendous jobs ahead. Hatred, oppression, ghastly intolerance, graft, corruption in law and politics, interference with the legitimate rights of others, arrogance because of wealth that can be tabulated—we have work that will keep us busy during the centuries ahead.

Our provincialism, our damnable national conceit and youthful pettiness must be seen and dissolved. We must come to know that a plague in China to-day is sickness and death in America to-morrow. We must recognize our country merely as a part, rather than exalt it as an entity. The world's the thing. The world! Instead of staying in our own back yard, squabbling over a pint of gin.

In the United States we as individuals are forever grumbling about a lack of economic success. But our

true objection is that some one else has more than we. We want a better class automobile. We want more expensive seats at the theatre. We want a more elaborate house.

Yet beneath my window here in Harbin are men and women whose chief worry is for sufficient food to keep them alive. Their prayer, as winter comes on, is for warm clothes. Their longing is for an opportunity to employ themselves in some occupation, any occupation, that will maintain life and give them a recess from the hell of doing nothing.

And these people beneath my window were not born to the gutter. Neither were they made destitute by a series of reverses for which they as individuals were partly responsible. A few years ago they were successful merchants. They were hard-working mechanics. They dug the land and made good crops. They were lawyers with profitable practices. They were brokers and barbers and drug clerks and miners and street-car conductors—individually no different from their professional brothers in America. In those days they, too, grumbled for luxuries and for power and for social position. Then the artificialities of society broke down. Now all these men want is enough food and enough clothes.

There's something terrifying about these Russians and their miseries. Just as there's something terrifying in the blind surety of our fellow countrymen.

In a cabaret the other night two Americans saw every one else drinking brandy, whisky or vodka. They ordered brandy. The waiter brought them champagne.

"We ordered brandy," they said.

"But, sirs, you are Americans," the waiter answered. "All Americans have money. It is a rule of the house that Americans drink champagne."

* * *

In another cabaret two dancing girls were seated at a side table. Their faces advertised their profession. They were joined by a young girl, fresh and beautiful, as yet unmarked.

Soon a handsome Englishman, his clothes and his manner giving assurance of ample wealth, came into the room. He hesitated and glanced about him. He spoke to the manager. That official hurried to the table where the two women and the girl sat.

"He wants you," said the manager, signing to the girl.

She went away. The women shrugged their shoulders.

"Beginner's luck," said one.

* * *

Two nights ago I saw a half-witted Russian with a moist chin and a withered arm. He was stumbling along the street before the prods of a Chinese policeman's scabbard. What crime the man had committed I couldn't find out. He fell at a curbing. The

policeman jabbed at him with his scabbard. It had no effect. He kicked him in the side. The man groaned. He kicked him in the face and sauntered away. As he lay there, men and women walked around him and went on.

. . .

I was having coffee in the lounge of the hotel. There was no other vacant chair. I was alone. A man came to my table.

"May I sit here?" he asked.

He was an inch over six feet and his shoulders were broad. His hair was white and thick. He was clean shaved. His face was a maze of deep wrinkles. Yet definitely he was a handsome man. Possibly that was because of his carriage; possibly because of his tailor.

"You have been in Harbin long?" he asked, after having ordered coffee.

"Only three days."

"Do you like it?"

"I can hardly say I'm enthusiastic."

"So!"

Neither from his appearance nor from his speech could I determine his nationality. He spoke English. He addressed the waiter in rapid Russian. There was something of the Frenchman about his manner. He said, "So!" as a Prussian says it.

"Perhaps you have not seen Harbin? No?"

"I don't know whether I have or not. I've driven and walked over the city. I've been to the cabarets."

He smiled indulgently and I was surprised. For some reason I had not expected to see kindness show on that face.

"It is nothing," he said, and set about pouring his coffee. He tasted it, drank it slowly. He finished the cup before speaking again. "One gets good coffee here."

We talked for a time about the fighting between Russians and Chinese, about the possibility of the League of Nations' interfering successfully. We compared Harbin with Paris. We chatted of discoveries made in the Gobi Desert.

"You will have brandy? Yes?"

I agreed. For another hour we sipped brandy and smoked. I found him a delightful person. He had been everywhere and had read many books. At eleven o'clock he extinguished the butt of his second cigar.

"It has been enjoyable," he said. "We are congenial? Yes?"

"Decidedly," I agreed. "I trust we may meet again."

"But wait, I am free for the night. May I suggest a drive? I might be able to show some sights you have not seen. Yes?"

Ordinarily I would have been suspicious; but I had left my money in the hotel safe, and the man had interested me.

"I should enjoy a drive," I said. "You are kind."

"Not at all."

For a time we drove, the bells in the Russian collar

jangling high over the horse's back. My friend told me stories of Harbin, its history, its people, and the wretchedness of the town. It was after midnight when he leaned forward and spoke to the driver of the *droshka*. We turned into a side street. We turned and turned again until I was totally lost. At last we stopped before a house with a dim light burning at the entrance. My friend sat back slightly. He looked at me.

"You know Paris well," he said. "Have you seen any curious sights in the city?"

"I'm not sure I understand," I answered, "but I think I do."

"Quite," and he nodded slowly. "But in Paris, Monsieur, that usually is staged for the benefit of the tourist. It is seldom real." He spoke a little more softly: "Would Monsieur be interested in seeing an unusual woman?"

"Naturally," I replied. "I'm interested in anything."

"Anything, Monsieur?"

"Anything," I assured him.

"Bien."

My host and I descended from the droshka and crossed the pavement. He rang the bell. The door was opened by a Chinese boy. From rooms along the hallway and at the end of the passage, women with their faces heavily painted peered at us.

"Monsieur," he said, and bowed.

I preceded him into the hallway. The door was closed. An elderly woman came to meet us. She spoke in Russian. Then suddenly she broke off.

"Ah," she said, and bowed to my friend. She addressed him in Russian, but he answered in German, explaining that I did not speak the other language. He asked about a girl named Katya or Kataya—I did not understand. Even yet I don't know.

"She is sufficiently recovered," replied the woman.

The man's eyebrows asked a question. The shoulders of the woman answered. He reached into his pocket and drew out a wallet. From it he took five bills which in American money amounted to twenty-five dollars. He handed them to the woman. She counted them. She put them in her bosom.

Then I heard a door open. A girl came running toward us. She was small and her hair was black as the breast feathers of a crow. She wore a dress of black. There was a single rope of pearls about her throat. She may have been eighteen. She ran to my friend and put her arms about his neck. I could understand nothing they said, yet I knew she pleaded with him. He patted her cheek and smiled—that gentle smile—and nodded in agreement. I could see the girl tremble. My friend, with his soft hands, attempted to quiet, to soothe her. But still she trembled.

"She speaks only Russian," he explained to me. "She was a peasant girl."

"What is it she wants?" I asked.

For an instant the most brutal expression I have ever seen flicked over his face, then once more he was smiling. He answered in his quiet, urbane voice.

"She is," he said, "mad for the satisfaction of her desires—for the only method in which she gets true pleasure. Yet she is in agony at the thought of the torment."

The woman, the owner of the house, led the way and we followed. She opened a side door and passed through a room, then she turned into a narrow hallway. As we walked I saw the shoulders of the girl move in sudden jerks. Her hands slid over her breasts and along the arm of my friend. Twice I heard her sob. The woman opened a small door. I had to stoop to pass through. The room was bare save that upon the wall two chains were fastened. Iron manacles hung from them. By the dim light that swung from the ceiling I saw that beneath the manacles there was dried blood upon the floor.

Before the door was shut the girl was tearing at her clothes. Her fingers fumbled. She could not unfasten her garments. She was crying in dry sobs. My friend talked with her in his soft voice. While he spoke he assisted her to undress. The woman opened the door of a small cabinet. She drew forth a pair of heavily padded protectors. She cupped them over the breasts of the girl and fastened them by two silken ropes which ran over the shoulders and were tied there. The girl ripped off her stockings.

She ran to the manacles. Facing the wall, she raised her arms. For the first time I saw her back. It was a myriad of scars that crossed and interlaced and wove in and out. Some of them were fresh. Some were not fully healed.

She grasped the chains in each hand. The man locked the cuffs. Quietly he spoke to her, soothingly, gently, he spoke. When the girl was fastened, the man and woman stepped back.

I saw her body tremble, jerk. I heard her sobs become quick moans. Then the door opened. She turned and looked over her shoulder. There was terror in her eyes. I noticed that the muscles of her face were twitching.

Into the room came the Chinese boy who had admitted us to the house. He wore only a small silken apron. He held a whip, a cat-o'-nine-tails. In his naked feet he tiptoed across the room. The woman closed the door. The boy drew nearer, nearer the girl. He held out the whip. She stared at it. He thrust it before him. Held it toward her. Gently he swished it—swished it—swished it. The girl began to speak. Rapidly the words came. She strained back in her chains, shook them and sobbed. The boy walked about her, from one side to the other, softly. His naked feet made no sound. There was only the voice of the girl and the gentle swish of the whip. The girl's words became a babble. Her face was streaked with tears. She moaned. Then he struck her. A great swirling

hiss came through the air and the thongs sank into the flesh. The girl straightened on tiptoe and for a moment remained rigid. He struck her again. She screamed. He struck again and again and again. Her back was all red with the blood which flowed slowly downward. Still he struck her, the whip singing through the air and tearing at the soft flesh.

The room seemed suddenly hot. I was stifled by the smell of my friend's cigar and by the salty smell of the blood. I felt sick and I pulled at the side of my collar.

At that moment the boy hesitated. He drew the whip over his shoulder. He struck more fiercely than before. The blow opened a gash in the small of her back. He struck again, full in the open cut. She became rigid. She rose to her tiptoes and strained taut against the chains. A great shriek of agonized ecstasy flew from her lips. Then she collapsed and hung limp. I saw the veins of her hands leap out above the clasping manacles.

As she wilted, the Chinese boy straightened. He stood for a moment poised. The whip, its thongs dripping red, slipped from his hand. Slowly his knees gave way. Half turning, he sank to the floor.

I started to leave. Then I saw the man who had brought me to the place. His face was a savage gloating. I saw him suddenly tremble, definitely shudder. I saw his eyes close, then open. I saw him throw off

an invisible something. Once more his face wore the smiling mask.

"Were you interested?" he asked. "Were you amused?"

XX

IN one of the poems of William Blake he writes of a blind man with a sword of darkness lunging at a shadow. That vagary suggests my feelings as I set out to write what I've seen and heard in China; for China is a mass of contradictions, is a bewildering confusion.

Before we go into the homes of the Chinese, before we sit down to dinner with them and discuss their daily life, it might be wise to glance quickly at the political, economic and military chaos now gripping the throat of four hundred million persons.

China is the oldest nation. She was mature during the centuries when Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria grew, flourished and decayed. Alexander might have saved his tears, for beyond his horizon lay a world perhaps more remarkable than any he had conquered.

Then, about three thousand years ago, China ceased to grow. She is probably the most remarkable example of arrested development. In the arts, in manufacture, in religions, literature, philosophy—in all that makes for the advancement of man and men, China entered a period of quiescence, even of retrogression. Only within recent years has she begun to show indications of an uncertain emergence.

Undoubtedly one of the most malignant influences in Chinese national life is a spirit of exclusion.

Through ages this nation has shut itself off from the rest of the world, has evolved a type of civilization peculiar to itself, has fostered a spirit of aloofness and nurtured a belief of superiority.

An indication of China's ignorance of the world and of her amusing arrogance was given by her reception and treatment of Lord Macartney, a British ambassador, who, in 1792, arrived in China to request a more complete trade exchange and to establish permanent diplomatic relations. The delightful reply of the Chinese emperor to His Majesty, King George III, can be quoted only in fragments.

"You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. . . . To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce. I have read your memorial; the earnest terms in which it is cast reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy."

In gentle and paternalistic phraseology the emperor goes on to explain why he cannot grant the supplication of the English king. A British ambassador, the emperor declares, could accomplish nothing. "For even if your envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilization, you could not possibly transplant our manners and our customs to your alien soil. Therefore, however adept the envoy might become, nothing could be gained thereby.

"Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfill the duties of the state; strange and costly objects do not interest me. I have no use for your country's manufactures.

"It behooves you, O king, to respect my sentiments and to display even increasing devotion and loyalty in future, so that by perpetual submission to our throne, you may secure peace and prosperity to your country hereafter."

The emperor declares that the reason for his kindly treatment of Lord Macartney is that "I do not forget the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of seas, nor do I overlook your excusable ignorance of the usages of our celestial empire."

The last line of the communication is the injunction: "Tremblingly obey and show no negligence!"

The message was dictated less than one hundred and fifty years ago!

In writing of China there is no need to discuss the glorious Ming dynasty, or to tell of its overthrow by the Manchus in 1644. In that year the Northerners conquered the land and remained its rulers until the Republic was declared in 1912.

The period of Manchu rule was liberally sprinkled with wars brought about by foreign aggression and by Chinese stupidity. After each war China was forced to pay indemnity. New ports were opened to foreign trade. Invariably China lost everything for

which she fought. Yet within a year she would again defy the world. England, Russia, Japan or France would then step forward, administer the necessary thrashing, and take whatever they wanted. The results of the Boxer Rebellion were necessary to teach China that her insistent belief in her own supremacy was ridiculous. Yet even that disaster has not carried full conviction: there are many Chinese who still expect the foreigner to be driven forth and the land to be freed of his hated presence.

During past centuries the confusion in China has been considerable, though authorities say it has seldom equaled the wild chaos of to-day. The story of modern China, of China during the last two decades, is full of sound and fury. There have been unrestrained lawlessness, rebellions and war. The truth of what has happened in recent years is known to few. What is going on at present apparently no one understands. The boldest interpreter of China dares not risk a guess about the future.

In the meantime China is being hacked to pieces by war lords—*Tuchuns,* they are called. These men, basing their right solely on might, have usurped as much power as their military forces made possible. So soon as one of them established absolute authority in a particular province or district, he reached out for more territory. But more territory meant an encroachment upon a neighboring Tuchun, meant interference with a neighbor's graft. That meant provincial war. These sectional wars have gone on more

than a decade. It's perfectly safe to predict they will continue.

There are two aspects of war in China. There is, occasionally, the glory of St. Crispin's Day. More often there is humor to cause the gods to roar their laughter at the shamed blushes of Mars.

Chinese armies are made up almost entirely of mercenaries. Men in the ranks, with few exceptions, have absolutely no interest in the success or failure of the Tuchun for whom, on that particular day, they happen to be fighting. To them the glory of war consists of sufficient rice to maintain a reasonably tight belt and enough uniform to keep out the cold.

Soldiers now doing battle in China have no understanding of the word "desertion": they change sides when they believe a change will profit them, or they change because their trenches aren't so comfortable as those of the "enemy." The procedure of change is simple: a soldier goes from one side to the other by altering the color of the rag he wears pinned upon his left arm.

When word gets out that a general has raised money to pay his troops, the entire opposing army tries to come over and enlist under his flag and bank account. Napoleon would declare God is on the side of the heavier purse in China.

This comic opera war is by no means limited to men in the ranks. Generals add color to the stage effect of the hostilities. Incidentally, I have yet to see a Chinese colonel or captain. With them, it's general

or nothing. And appointments are not made as they are made at West Point. It's known that one Tuchun named his generals by having a group of his friends draw lots.

One war lord recently attacked his enemy on a national holiday. The aggressor was successful and carried the trench. He had no sooner established himself than he received a truce party from his opponent. The visitors pointed out that the attack had been made on a holiday. They wished to protest.

The offending general instantly made his apologies. He declared it an oversight on his part. The date had escaped him. He withdrew his troops to the exact spot from which they had attacked. His enemies returned to the trench. All was quiet until the next morning, until the holiday was ended. There was then a second assault. The trench was carried and retained without objection.

In China it is considered bad form to fight in wet weather. Yet one morning, only a short time ago, it was believed imperative that a particular stronghold should be carried. But on that morning there was a slight drizzle. The attacking generals conferred. They devised a plan. They warded off all bad luck by having each man march with an umbrella held over his head.

A Chinese newspaper a fortnight ago reported dissension among the war lords. One of them was set for battle. He properly notified his enemy. The enemy wasn't ready and asked for a delay. It was

granted. A week later a second notice was sent. A second delay was asked and granted. The third notification made known that the general desirous of war would wait no longer. "I have delayed," he said, "as long as I think proper. If my opponent can't prepare in this time, it's his own fault. I shall certainly begin to fight."

One evening last week I sat in a Peiping hotel talking with an American who had served during the World War as captain of a machine gun company. He told numerous stories of amusing happenings in Chinese battles. Finally, it seemed to me, he quoted from his imagination rather than from war records.

"You won't be offended," I laughed, "if I take that one *cum grano?*"

"You don't believe it? I don't blame you. What are you doing Saturday afternoon?"

"Anything you like."

"Have on some old clothes and I'll drive by about one o'clock."

"Fine. Where'll we go?"

"To the war," he said, as he rose and signaled an abrupt good night.

I knew, of course, it was a joke; but on Saturday I was dressed when he arrived with two friends. I climbed into the car and we started away.

"Really," I asked, "where are we going?"

"To the war."

"What war?"

"Any you like. There're half a dozen going on within a distance of a few miles."

"But I don't want to go to war. I didn't rear myself to be a soldier—certainly not a Chinese soldier."

"That's quite all right. It's a fine day; there'll probably be a number of visitors."

I still thought I was being made to hold the bag, and, therefore, determined to show no fear. That was before we had driven some twenty miles from Peiping—before I heard the spasmodic popping of rifles and the occasional smooth patter of machine guns. Suddenly one of the men pointed.

"There's Clarke's car," he said. "Let's ask his boy which way he went."

We stopped and inquired of the chauffeur into which trench Mr. Clarke had gone. The chauffeur directed us. We left our automobile and turned into an open stretch of country. We walked for perhaps a quarter of a mile, then started up an incline which led to a plateau. From this plateau came the sound of the firing. My friends completely disregarded the possibility of being killed. They strolled along in the open. Suddenly an extra number of guns came into action.

"Having an unusually good time, aren't they?" remarked my host.

"They may be," I said, "but I'm not. How much nearer are we going?"

"Nearer? We're going all the way."

My further advance was pride conquering fear, but

I held on; I assumed the nonchalance of my comrades. From the top of the plateau we could see an open space with two series of triple trenches facing each other. The first lines were separated by a distance of about one hundred yards. There was a most infernal racket going on. I dived into the entrance of the rear trench. My comrades laughed at me.

"Why be simple?" I asked. "Suppose they take a pot shot at you?"

"They won't. And, besides, they couldn't hit us."

We went through two communication trenches and came into the front line. It was about eight feet wide, clean, well built, banked with stones. Several men stood on the firing step. Frequently they blazed away; but their guns were held at angles of forty-five degrees. The only possible chance of harming the enemy was for a bullet to go far into the air and then drop back on his head.

A machine gunner alternated between firing a strip of cartridges and sipping his tea. Seated in the trench were soldiers playing cards or Mah Jongg. At intervals they relieved those on the firing step. One man lost a big hand at Mah Jongg. He jumped up, caught his rifle, banged away as fast as he could, then returned to the game, muttering his curses.

As a guest of the army we were asked to join Mr. Clarke, who, with a young Englishman, was having tea with three Chinese gentlemen. A soldier came near and began to fire. One of the gentlemen waved him away. He disturbed our conversation.

About dusk, as we drove back to Peiping, my host of the afternoon asked if I still doubted his stories of Chinese armies and battles. I assured him I could believe anything about them.

"But why," I asked, "make the pretense? Nobody was trying to kill anybody else. Why waste the powder?"

"What we saw this afternoon was all hippodrome. The soldiers on opposite sides are friends. Last week they were fighting for the same general. Next week they'll probably be together again. Why hurt each other? Yet they must make a racket, else there wouldn't be any war and the generals wouldn't pay."

I asked if all battles were like the one we had seen during the afternoon.

"Decidedly not," he answered. "Occasionally they're damnable. I have seen them with quite a few dead and wounded lying about. When two forces get together where there's a grudge, they put on a nasty show."

Two days later I understood what he meant.

A Chinese general had quartered his troops about twenty-five miles east of Peiping. Suddenly he decided to give up fighting: he had made all the money he wanted. Without informing the army of his intentions, he sailed to Japan, there to retire and live off his profits, as is the custom of wealthy Chinese war lords.

After the general's flight became known, leaders of the Nationalist army sent out detachments to disarm his soldiers. At a railway station a trainload of

the disbanded troops were ordered to throw down their guns. The moment the order was carried out, the Nationalists opened fire, killing some six hundred men, who, at the time of their slaughter, were totally unable to defend themselves.

The wounded were collected and placed in box-cars. After waiting several hours the cars were attached to a train going to Peiping. At each station an inventory was taken. Those who had died were dumped out. Likewise the more troublesome wounded were left along the way.

The train bearing the injured arrived in Peiping at nine o'clock in the evening. There was no person or group of persons, from the army or from any medical institution, to receive them. They were dragged from the box-cars and left upon the cement platform.

At nine o'clock in the evening two score wounded men were scattered about the central railway station of Peiping, a city of more than a million persons.

It was October. Nights in Peiping during that month are cold. The days often are burning hot.

Broken men lay sprawled upon the cement throughout a night when three blankets were needed for comfort in a hotel room. They had no covering. Some had no shirts; they were naked to the waist.

Next day was clear. By ten in the morning, a brilliant sun, slanting under the platform roof, shone full upon shattered legs and punctured bodies. Over gaping wounds was the hum of green flies.

At noon a few civilians passed about the platform.

They gave out water and ragged quilts. They threw bits of cloth over the faces of those who had died in the night.

During a period of thirty hours nothing else was done for the wounded soldiers. I saw them first at five o'clock on the day they had arrived. Three of them I shall never forget.

I left the platform at five-thirty. The living and the dead still lay there. Gazing at them were dozens of Chinese. I was told the crowd had watched them all day. Next morning the newpapers announced that the wounded had been moved during the night.

That railway platform in Peiping is suggestive of war in China when humor is omitted, though some say, some who talk of mutilations and butcheries, that the station mildly suggested the potential horrors of Chinese warfare.

And nothing, not the groans of unattended men, nor the turmoil of civil wars, nor corruption among armies, nor political intrigues, nor any specific fact or group of facts, can indicate the unbridled confusion now existing throughout China. Chaos, even to a transient, is quickly apparent.

XXI

PEIPING, dear, is—but why should I write of Peiping? Certainly the old Chinese city is not what I'm thinking of most. You've no idea, Annette, how much I'd love to see you. This business of traveling is fine—after it's over. I get lonely.

I've bought a portable Victrola. That helps some. It adds another bulky piece to my luggage, but it wakes me in the morning with Bach, and it drifts me off to sleep at night with Casals playing "The Evening Star" or "The Prize Song." Casals' tones are glorious. Even on this tin-panny portable I found here in Peiping, they float down from the sky—but it was Peiping I started to write about.

I wish it were Pekin and not Peiping. I hate Peiping. But the Nationalists insist on having it so.

You see, *chérie,* Pekin means "Capital in the North." When the Nationalists climbed into the saddle they carried the capital to the South and established it at Nanking. They altered the name of the old, the defeated, capital to Peiping, which means "Peace in the North."

And that's rather amusing.

For the war drums can be heard in the outlying districts of Peiping: the rattle of muskets can be heard in the streets. Besides this open fighting, there's an

underlying bitterness which bursts forth whenever a Chinese is talking with one whose silence the Chinese can rely upon.

The Northerner hates the Southerner and swears he will never be ruled from the South. Yet the conquering Southern soldiers—the Nationalists—swagger about Peiping, exhibiting their ragged gray uniforms and swinging their eager rifles. Bandits masquerade as tax collectors and openly rob the people. Marauders wander to and fro over the face of the city and contribute to abundant evil. Kidnaping is carried on in the heart of town. The ennui of the barracks is periodically broken by an execution. Northerners and Southerners spit on each other, then draw their swords and hack.

While this goes on, golden pens are exhibited in glass cases because they were used in signing the Kellogg peace pact—that beautiful world peace, not unlike the peace of Peiping. "Peace in the North"! It's a charming name, admirable for hooding the facts, for confusing the man unwilling to strip the scabbard of soft words from the keen sword of facts.

Peiping is—I vow I'll tell you about the glorious old city and neither Casals nor the Nationalist party nor the gates of hell shall prevail against me—Peiping, is, to me, the most glamorous, the most fascinating town I've seen.

All Peiping is divided into three parts—my old Latin tutor would be very pleased with that—and in

"PEACE IN THE NORTH"

This man, with two score other wounded men, lay on the station platform in Peiping for thirty-six hours. The picture was made soon after he died. Hundreds of men and women walked by, around and over him. "Peiping" means "Peace in the North."

order to understand the divisions you had best recall a block toy of your nursery days. Remember the large box into which fitted a slightly smaller one, then a smaller, and a smaller. That is the topography of Peiping.

The outermost walls—for everything in China, you understand, must be enclosed by walls—were outlined by Kublai Khan more than seven hundred years ago. The walls now upon the line drawn by the ancient ruler are faced with brick and have stood for five centuries. These ramparts are forty feet high, broader than Michigan Avenue or Piccadilly, and are fourteen miles in length. They are called the Tartar walls.

Next are the walls of the Imperial City.

And in the center of Peiping stands the innermost division, the mysterious Forbidden City. Its pink walls are two miles in length. The sloping roofs of its palaces are orange, and they give back to the sun a glare of dormant antagonism. Only since 1912 has other than ruler or officer been allowed within the Forbidden City. Even now there is one quarter of it where none may go, one small corner of the vast grounds where in ages past trod the celestial feet of the heaven-born.

Within that confine, less than half a mile in length, dwell women whose wrinkles still are painted, whose hair is daily adorned with flowers bright as their silken garment, women who stare with dimmed eyes, who live in soft memories of days when they were

imperial concubines. And, it is told, that eunuchs, fat now, and old, still dress themselves in robes of ancient splendor and still plot their intrigues. It is the last mystery that once was China. . . .

The palaces of the past, beneath the clenched fist of a young republic, have become the museums of the present. Where, in centuries gone, there sat emperors upon a throne resplendent, there now sits, a trifle askew, a cheap photograph of Dr. Sun Yat Sen. Weeds are thick between the stones of the imperial walks. The gorgeous little canal, which flows beneath the five marble bridges in the courtyard of the Forbidden City, is now a stream of stinking water where fishermen throw their nets.

Temples, of which there are many in Peiping—"The Temple of Heaven" being the most sublime architectural conception of worship I have ever seen—are open at all times to the public. Soldiers take tickets at gates that once were ceremonial portals. Dust is thick upon altars. Treasures of history are surrendered to corrosion.

But the Republic goes on! Soldiers bluster about the town. Art, beauty, romance, glories of the past, are needlessly trod underfoot—scorned and derided to prove the downfall of imperial domination.

Yet despite temples and palaces being handed over to decay and dry-rot, despite rebellion and counter-rebellion waving swords, despite governments being set up only to be disemboweled—despite all that, there

still continues a feverish street life in the alluring city of Peiping.

The chief fascination is in the medley of strange sounds. The shouts of cooks. The deep-throated "'Shaw-'shaw" of the rickshaw boys: the swift pad-pad-pad of their racing feet. The low moan of a leper crouched over his begging bowl. The precise drum and bugle of foreign troops. The bellow of hawkers. The tremulous singing of a young lover sitting at the door of his shop. Then at night, when Peiping is drenched in mystery, the whine of a Chinese fiddle—it sings its melody in the heart of one who pleads his yearning beneath a heavy moon of beaten silver.

. . .

Travel in China is almost at a standstill. The rolling stock has been stolen by first one general and then another. The tracks are unrepaired.

When I left Harbin I made an overnight trip to Mukden. From there in normal times I should have caught an express train direct to Peiping. That is now impossible. Defeated and retreating troops have destroyed miles of track. One is forced to travel south all day to Darien, there catch a boat, sail twenty-four hours to Tientsin, and from Tientsin go overland to Peiping.

The day I made the last leg of this journey the train consisted of the following: an engine that was years out of date, a coal car of the same period, a flat car heaped with freight, an open car jammed with sheep,

five dilapidated coaches and an armored car with a machine gun turret on top.

• • •

A short time ago there was vast excitement in Peiping religious circles. A stone Buddha that had sat for ages suddenly rose and stood erect. The story flew from mouth to mouth. Peasants flocked to the site of the miracle. The road by the pagoda was choked with traffic. Hundreds of invalids and cripples stumbled to the shrine to receive the sacred blessing. Wonders of healing were performed at the seat of grace. A stack of discarded sticks and other props for lame humanity began to grow.

Everything would have been perfectly all right, but the monks became greedy. They raised their healing prices. Rumors spread. The police investigated. Yesterday, under pressure, the monks confessed they had slightly assisted the stone Buddha in rising.

They have been placed in prison. To-morrow they'll be forced to parade as penitents through the streets of the city.

• • •

Butcher shops in Peiping especially interest me.

Each is a small stall with poles and rods criss-crossed in the ceiling. There are nails protruding from the pillars and posts. There are rods jutting over the street. Hanging from everywhere are the various meats. There are scores of ducks coated with a pre-

servative that resembles varnish. There are roasts and hams treated in the same fashion. There are sheep backbones with heart, liver and other organs still attached. The backbones, incidentally, are hung out over the public walks. One parts them and passes through as one would divide a bead curtain.

There are pieces of meat swinging from nails. There are pieces of meat dangling from hooks. Some of the meat is black, some is green. The lanes surrounding the shops are inches deep in dust. The meats within the shops are inches deep in flies.

After a purchase has been made it is placed upon a wilted cabbage leaf. A string is tied about the meat and the cabbage leaf. The customer catches the top of the string and goes away. The backbone of sheep is coiled gracefully upon the leaf and the black heart of mutton sways from it like a pendulum.

* * *

I've seen only three or four Pekinese dogs in Peiping —See? It doesn't make sense. It should be Pekin. But, no matter: I haven't seen many of the ugly little brutes, and perhaps you think I'm sorry.

These mishaps are popular with the Chinese after a lukewarm fashion. They feed them and care for them, but as yet I've seen no native woman put them on silk cushions and take them to ride in her limousine.

Chinese insist upon the animals being smaller than those commonly seen in America. In Peiping the dog is called the "sleeve dog": a prizewinner is supposed

to be small enough to be carried in the sleeve of a Chinese gown.

At street fairs the varmints are offered for sale. A good one—if any—is priced from ten to twenty dollars. The cost of taking one to America is the passage fare of twelve dollars.

* * *

One Sunday morning recently I heard the thumping of a drum and the tooting of a cornet. I told Wu—Wu is my rickshaw boy, my shopping guide, my companion, my playmate; I'll tell you about him sometime—I told Wu to slow down. I listened with fond care. Then came the sound of the tambourine, the other member of the musical trinity. I was assured. I shied Wu off sharp right. Soon we came upon a meeting of the Salvation Army.

The song was "Rock of Ages," and the warriors were making a mighty noise before the Lord. I wanted to join in, but they sang in Chinese. After the song was ended, the testimonials began. Then a prayer. And a short talk. When the drum was struck again the singers sang "Bringing in the Sheaves." Somehow it all made me rather homesick.

* * *

Whoever started the rumor of Chinese placidity surely never saw the Chinese police in action.

One afternoon not long ago I was at a street fair. An automobile smashed into a rickshaw. Nobody was

hurt, but the hullabaloo sounded as if scores of dead men were strewn about the street. First one policeman jumped upon the running board. He shoved his face into the face of the driver. Then a second officer leapt from the other side. In only a moment, five policemen were shouting into the ears of the luckless man at the wheel. He offered to pay for the rickshaw. The officers demanded he go to jail. He offered to give money to the rickshaw boy. The officers demanded he go to jail. He said he wouldn't. They bellowed at each other and flung their arms about —and demanded he go to jail.

He went to jail.

* * *

Years ago, a speaker at my old preparatory school declared tobacco divided honors with alcohol as the greatest curse of modern man. I remember how his breast swelled as he elaborated upon the damnation of civilization by the debilitating and corrupting weed. In comparison, King James's *Counterblast* was praise.

"Tobacco companies," he said, "have gone so far with their insidious propaganda that in China they give away cigarettes to little children." He lowered his voice. "Think of it, my young friends, thousands of Chinese children, some of them almost babes, tottering about with cigarettes between their otherwise innocent lips."

The idea struck my fancy. It appealed to me. It seemed rather sporting. I wanted to see a Chinese

infant forgo the pacifier in order to smoke an American cigarette. But I have been disappointed. Since being in China I've not seen one child smoking. Grown-ups smoke a great deal. The cigarette is most popular. Then the pipe. One seldom sees a cigar.

• • •

Laundries in China are about the same as Chinese laundries in America—except that charges are less.

All Peiping laundries are manual. The average laundry is about ten feet square. One man washes in a corner and hangs the clothes on bamboo poles outside the entrance. When there is rain the poles are placed across the rafters. The partner of the firm irons upon a square block of wood that rests upon a table. It is the common practice of the men to eat and sleep in the room where they work, though the more affluent operators have small living quarters at the back of their shops.

The work these men do is beautiful; they return the most delicate feminine garment in a condition unknown to the impersonal methods of Western machines.

The cost is two and one-half cents a garment, regardless of what the garment is. A handkerchief, two and one-half cents. A sheet, two and one-half cents. A shirt, two and one-half cents. The coat of a wash suit, two and one-half cents. If you want to make a monthly agreement, they will wash and iron everything you send them for one dollar and seventy-five cents a month.

An old gap-toothed laundryman with whom Wu and I stopped to smoke a pipe said: "Price no very good. Work all same very good." I glanced at the silken garments on the board before him—his pride of workmanship was entirely justified.

. . .

To-morrow I'm leaving Peiping for Nankow. From there to the Great Wall of China.

The Great Wall of China, *chérie!*

It has been one of my dreams—a serious dream.

XXII

THE Great Wall of China!

The ordinary sights for which tourists cross ocean and desert have so often failed to interest me that I am suspicious of their lure. Temples, palaces and shrines too frequently have been made glamorous by imaginative pens writing enchantment where even moonlight shows only an ordinary pile of stones.

But the Great Wall of China. . . .

I would forgo almost any shrine rather than lose an evening with the second porter of a hotel in Kyoto. A shoemaker with a hump on his left shoulder caused me to forget I was on my way to see the famous bronze Buddha at Kamakura. The subtleties of no altar compare with the elusive talk of a very fat and very wise billiard marker in Tientsin. Wu, my rickshaw boy in Peiping, has afforded me more pleasure than all the pagodas of the city.

And yet the Great Wall of China. . . .

Men in modern centuries have declared the Chinese Wall to be the eighth wonder of the world. Scientists say the only object upon the earth discernible from the planet of Mars is the Great Wall. But neither of these facts goes beyond a mass selection or a laboratory belief.

Hundreds of writers, their pens dripping superla-

tives, have told of the Wall. They have recounted the history of its construction, have cited unbelievable figures of weights and times and distances, have amazed unknowing readers by telling of the Wall's part in the affairs of men.

Yet nothing that has been written, pictured, or related can intimate the humbling magnitude of that great stone serpent writhing in silent eloquence over thousands of bleak miles. Nothing can suggest its awful splendor. Nothing can tell its depressing proof that all human strivings are but vanity.

Some years ago it was my agonizing privilege to descend into the Grand Canyon of Colorado. I did it on the back of a mule, that stubborn beast that, as Dr. Johnson remarked, has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of progeny. Once the journey had been completed, I vowed I should have no further ado with a mule or any of his relatives, except only the horse. How I broke my oath in strange and wondrous fashion this story will unfold.

One travels from Peiping to Nankow in a motor car; one travels and jolts and bumps over roads that are frightful. Yet these roads for years have been highways and originally were adequately constructed. They have been left unrepaired so long that they are almost impassable. I'm told their condition is indicative of most roads in China.

Nankow is a village of possibly a thousand damned souls. It lies in the middle of a plain, dropped there apparently for no reason, a plain upon which there is

nothing save white dust and white stones and gaunt hogs. Beyond the town, bleak mountains shove their heads into the sky, and force the white and filmy fleece to divide as it rides upon slow winds.

In Peiping I had accepted the assurance of friends that at Nankow I could take a train. It would carry me up the mountain to within an hour's walk of the Great Wall. Such an arrangement seemed ideal.

At Nankow I learned that I had been misinformed. All trains had been commandeered by the militarists. There was only one method of passing over the fifteen miles from the village to the Wall. That was upon the back of a donkey.

"Is there no other way?" I asked my guide.

"None," he answered.

I was troubled. The Babylonians disposed of conquered kings by sewing them inside the skins of asses. Egyptians signified a dolt by a hieroglyph—a head with ears of an ass sprouting therefrom. The Greeks hated the little beast and made impolite phrases in his dishonor. The Romans thought that day ill-omened when they encountered an ass. I recalled all that. Then I remembered that lamentable affair of Balaam's. I remembered the Golden Ass. My worry increased.

"You mean there's positively no other method of transportation?"

"None," he answered.

"Well," I decided, after cogitation, "George Borrow rode one. So did Sancho Panza. So did Xanthias. They were noble fellows. There's no reason why I

shouldn't follow their custom. Go wake the ass and, after the manner of Titania, I'll pluck the wings from painted butterflies, to fan the moonbeams from his sleepy eyes."

When word was carried from the interior of the ramshackle little hotel that the European man would ride a donkey, when that fact was made known, an uproar broke forth outside the gateway. The guide informed me that the sound was made by the donkey boys. They invited me to come forth and select my mount.

As I appeared in the doorway of the hotel a great clamor greeted me. Each donkey boy, a healthy young brute in dirty garments of rags, stood behind his beast and tried to shove the animal forward. The clatter going on, the guide explained, was the declaration of virtues and abilities of the individual carriers. Suddently out of the uproar leapt a familiar sound. I caught the words "Jack Dempsey." I looked at the boy who spoke them. He was pointing at his donkey and repeating: "Jack Dempsey."

"What does he mean, Jack Dempsey?" I demanded.

"It's the name of his donkey."

Another boy announced that his pride was called Fatty Arbuckle. A third had dubbed his "Ham and Eggs." A tiny white donkey blinked in calm dignity, totally unaware of the prestige conferred upon him each time he was addressed as "Harvard College." After a look over the lot I finally selected a rugged beast.

His backbone just reached my hip, though the tips of his ears rose well above my chest. The bridle was a grass rope. The saddle was a blue cotton quilt folded to such thickness that my legs dangled far from the sides of the uncomplaining little fellow. Perhaps his complaisance was caused by my having leaned forward and whispered: "Come, while I thy amiable cheek do coy, and stick muck-roses in thy sleek smooth head, and kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy."

Then the guide mounted his donkey. The boys swung the provision baskets and water bottles over their shoulders, gave the donkeys great whacks with wooden clubs: "Get up, Whiskey and Soda," called my boy; "Apple-sauce," called the guide—we were off for the Great Wall of China.

As one passes from the village of Nankow he leaves behind all that is modern; and, at a donkey pace, travels for four hours in the Middle Ages.

The little road, winding and twisting up mountains, wandering entirely at random through glorious valleys, has for more than two thousand years been the main highway for both trader and warrior, for Chinese and for the fierce peoples of the North.

A boy of nineteen, his queue hanging down his naked back, turned slowly from his work in the two-acre farm which supports eight persons. He leaned upon his hoe and peered out from beneath a hat of straw, shaped like the hat of a Quaker. A slow grin crossed his face when he saw such long legs dangling over the side of a donkey.

As we drew near a pass there sounded the faint rhythm of small bells. More and more clear came the dripping chime, until there appeared the lead camel of a caravan coming down from Mongolia. The great beasts, with their curious swinging strides, walked softly. Enormous burdens were packed like trunks on either side their humps. Some of the drivers, men with faces so burned and blown that their skin seemed parchment stretched stiff, rode with a swaying motion upon the backs of the animals. Other drivers walked, and called their sharp cries. As the caravan drifted beside us, the men looked; but their expression did not change. Their eyes were ageless. No sight, regardless of how strange to them, could provoke either laughter or tears.

"Whiskey and Soda," shouted my boy, and belabored the posterior of my emotionless little donkey. But the hide of the beast was immune to the most frantic beating. He chose his own pace and refused, regardless of punishment or inducement, to alter it.

We started up a rise on top of which small houses were perched. Halfway up we could hear the shrill voices of children.

"Wygolin! Wygolin!" . . . "European man! European man!" they called.

We entered the village. The gate of every house was filled with those who had come to stare at the strange person with white skin. The children, totally naked, ran beside my donkey and peered at me. I was the Wizard of Oz.

Beyond the village we came upon a drove of shaggy Mongolian ponies. The men who guarded them rode on saddles of unusual height. Their stirrups were short as those of jockeys. Genghis Khan had ridden on such a saddle, with such length stirrups.

Shortly before noon my guide pointed ahead. "In the gorge there," he said, "we'll have lunch." As we turned into the pass I heard a soft murmur as of far-away music. I stopped and peered about me. The guide smiled: "It's the water coming down from the mountain. We're in 'The Playing Harp Gorge.'" To one side of the stream, which murmured its song over smooth stones, we stepped from our donkeys and began lunch.

While we ate, a solitary traveler appeared on the road. He was riding a steer he guided by a rope attached to a ring in the animal's nose. Instead of a saddle, he sat upon a bundle of hides and furs. He had bought them in distant provinces and was taking them to trade in Peiping.

Soon after the trader passed, we heard the thud and rattle of a mountain cart. As it approached, bounding from stone to stone, we saw it was made of strong wood and braced with iron to withstand the incessant jolting. The rims of the wheels were four inches in width. They were protected by iron bands held in place by heavy brads. The driver and his wife and their four children gazed at us wide-eyed.

When lunch had been finished we mounted our donkeys and rode away. Below us to one side lay a

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

crumbling village. Once it had been a center of war. Repeatedly it had withstood the Tartar. Twice it had defeated the Mongol. It had turned back Genghis Khan himself.

Steadily we climbed until we entered a narrow gorge. We passed through. Behind us had been dust and rocks and desolation. Before us lay Canaan, a valley of soft beauty and infinite calm. Within its narrow confines a herd of sheep clipped the grass to its roots. Occasionally in the sea of white a black face was reared, as the back of a dolphin curves upward from still waters. Standing off alone, upon a rock above the valley, a young man looked down upon his flock. He, too, could have killed his Goliath.

We passed through the valley, up a steep incline, around an abrupt corner, and—

"The Great Wall of China," said the guide, pointing upward.

The Great Wall stretches from the seacoast to the borders of Tibet, a distance of two thousand miles. In America it would extend from New York to Kansas City. In Europe it would extend from Marseilles to Constantinople.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are one with the dust. The Temple of Diana at Ephesus is now but a few moldering columns. The statue of Jupiter Olympus, "made by Phidias the Athenian," has disappeared. No more is the tomb of Mausolus. The watchtower of Pharos, built "for the benefit of sailors," has surrendered to the sea. The Colossus of

Rhodes, of such size that a man could hardly grasp a thumb of it with both his arms, was destroyed by an earthquake. Its fragments have answered time's beckoning.

There remain, of all the wonders of the world, only the great Pyramid of Gizeh, a tomb which Pliny called a foolish and idle display of the wealth of kings; only this tomb and the Great Wall of China.

The original Chinese wall was built by the Emperor Chin, a contemporary of Hannibal. It was begun in 219 B.C. and was completed fifteen years later. How long it stood is not known. Probably about seven centuries. The wall now in existence, the Great Wall, was begun in 555 A.D. Thirty-two years were required to build it.

At times as many as a million men were actively engaged in the construction. Thousands of these laborers, most of them prisoners of war and criminals, perished by falling. When work was slow in progress, victims were chosen at random and hurled down into the foundations. Their fate was a goad to their companions. Owing to the narrow heights over which the Wall passes, even the goats, as they dragged heavy stones up almost inaccessible ridges, sometimes lost their footing and crashed to death.

The Great Wall is twenty-five feet thick at the base and diminishes to a width of fifteen feet at the top. In height it varies from fifteen to thirty feet, save where watchtowers rise forty feet above the ground.

These towers, for a distance of two thousand miles, are placed at intervals never exceeding a mile.

The Great Wall of China, the most famous of all defensive barriers, was erected by Chinese emperors to protect the land against the Tartars and the Mongols of the North. Its tremendous length has afforded sites for battles innumerable. Around its gates, made of thick wood covered with iron, thousands have died in combat. The Great Wall has played its part well. Gibbon declared that by deflecting the hordes of Asia into Europe it was partly responsible for the fall of Rome. It has decided the fate of peoples. It has written history.

And now, utterly useless, but a plaything before the muzzle of a modern gun, it twists its lonely way over mountains and plains. Upon it only the ghosts of ancient warriors tread their weary watch. An unused thing, a monument to the futility of that which is mortal, its solemn grandeur yet demands and receives humility, bent knees and hands supplicant. . . .

After climbing steps so steep that they set the muscles in my legs quivering, I came to a watchtower high upon a peak. From there I saw the sinuous thread of masonry twist over the land, ignore mountains and heights, disdain an easier path, until the Great Wall of China shrank to a thin gray line, then passed beneath the distant lip of the inverted bowl above me.

But for me it did not end there. As I stood alone in that ancient sentry tower, nothing living in my

world save myself, my guide, the donkey boys and the donkeys resting far away at the base of the Wall—as I stood alone, a spark in vastness, the shackles of space and time were stricken from me and I saw the Wall in its full two thousand miles.

I saw the ancient bowman peering out over the hills, protecting his country against the barbarian. I, too, peered out over the hills. I was present when other warriors toiled up the steps and the guard was changed. I saw Genghis Khan, the Emperor of All Men, ride out from amidst his horde, his saddle high and his stirrups short. I saw him reconnoiter and lay his plans for the attack.

I heard the blare of battle trumpets. I heard the thud of spears on shields of horsehide. I heard the twang of the bowstring. Loud in my ears sounded the sobs of dying men. . . .

At sunset I came down and left the Great Wall of China, left it to stand until my petty dust mingles with the universal dust, until my children are but a memory, left it to stand and laugh its soundless mirth at the two-legged maggots who have crawled their arrogant path along its mighty spine.

XXIII

DEAR Dr. Shugerman: I'm writing you from ward B-2 of the Pekin Union Medical Hospital. I've been here now for two weeks; at least, they tell me I've been here so long. Part of the time I didn't know where I was.

Before I left home you warned me never to eat uncooked vegetables in the Orient, never to touch fruit unless it had been peeled, and to be careful of what water I drank. I remember your telling me all that. I followed your instructions to the letter. Yet here I lie in bed.

Where I caught dysentery I have no idea. But heaven knows I know when it announced its arrival.

I had been to Nankow and from there to the Great Wall of China. I came back from the Wall to Nankow and spent the night. The next day I started for the Ming Tombs. A mile from them the car broke down. I walked on and looked over the famous burying ground of the ancient emperors. Then I ate a basket lunch I had brought from the hotel. The chauffeur had been unable to repair the car, so I lay down for a nap. Until that time I had been feeling perfectly well. How long I slept I don't know, but I waked with a pain as if hot swords were being thrust through and through and through me. Besides the pain there

was nausea which caused me to see green and puce.

The chauffeur had repaired the car. He and the guide bundled me into it. We started for Peiping. After about ten miles the engine sputtered and again went dead. The guide, a highly sensible fellow, knew we had to get into Peiping. He also knew the gates of the city are locked each night at eight o'clock.

He stopped a farmer, paid him to dismount from his donkey, hired the beast and put me upon a saddle of blankets. The guide, the chauffeur and the farmer plodded along for two hours, holding my arms and never once complaining.

Then a bullock cart came up from behind us. The guide talked with the man, a great Mongolian, and asked that I be allowed to ride in the bottom of his cart. It was agreed and they stretched me out on the floor. I shall never forget that bullock cart. I shall never forget the iron brads in the rims of its wheels.

We arrived at the city gates ten minutes before they were to be closed for the night. Once inside the walls, the guide took me from the cart and telephoned for an ambulance.

I remember getting into the ambulance. I remember arriving at the hospital. I remember a red rose one of the Chinese nurses wore thrust in the front of her white uniform. And that about totals my memory of that night. The fever, you see, had come on.

For two weeks, now, they've treated me. The chief medicine is *yatren*. My diet consists of chicken broth and rice water—a filthy, gummy goo, this rice water.

If the Devil doesn't serve rice water at his chief torments he's overlooking a mighty good bet.

The Pekin Union Medical Hospital, a unit of the Rockefeller Foundation, is probably as fine a hospital as any in the world. It has been built, has been equipped and is operated to satisfy the most exacting American standards. The appearance of the buildings and the equipment of the plant are more impressive than that of even Johns Hopkins. It is rather surprising to find stuck in the middle of China one of the most elaborate, most perfectly prepared, most modern of all hospitals.

The institution is financed by the Rockefellers. They founded it as a hospital for the treament of sickness in China and as a laboratory for Western doctors to study diseases of the East, and thus equip themselves to assist in bettering world health conditions.

The doctors, the nurses and the staff are as competent and as kind as doctors and nurses in any part of the world. The institution is governed by a board, of which half are Americans and half Chinese. Most heads of departments are American or European. The head nurses are Occidental. All other nurses are Chinese.

The chief of staff in the medical division is an Austrian, a pleasant, careful man. He has been visiting me daily. The head nurse of my ward is a woman from Carolina—how I should like to be head nurse in a hospital where she had dysentery.

But my little Chinese nurse I adore. Her name is

Miss Tsai. She is absolutely tiny, is laughing most of the time, knows how to say "Good-a-morning" as well as "I very thank you," and she allows me to smoke as much as I like. Each morning as she bathes me she bemoans my loss of weight. She pulls up her sleeve and shows her own little arm, then she signs that I must get well so that I can be as strong as she.

Incidentally, you should see her bathe me. The first few days I was too weak to help at all. I couldn't raise myself and she was far too small to lift me. So she would wash my chest, then she would soap the rag and wait. She knew what would happen. And it never failed. In a minute a pain would come and jerk me upright. As I would sit rigid with the agony upon me, my little nurse would hastily scrub my back.

You won't think me rude if I tell you I've laughed about your warnings against Oriental diseases. You were so exceedingly careful in advising me about them, particularly about dysentery. But frankly, Doctor, warnings and advice are no good; the most careful traveler in the Orient runs a constant risk of picking up dysentery. That is true regardless of antitoxins, of injections, regardless of precautions about food and water, regardless of anything.

Against leprosy, typhoid, smallpox and the better understood diseases, one can make a reasonable fight. But one must take his chances with dysentery and the other cursed intestinal ailments.

You dare not eat anything at a street restaurant. At the finest Chinese eating houses you dine with a

digestional sword dangling above you. In a private home all vegetables have to be prepared in accordance with strict laws. Lettuce and unskinned tomatoes are dangerous at all times. Plates and glasses and silver invariably are passed through boiling water before being brought to the table. Bread is toasted. Only tinned butter shipped from America or Europe is eaten. Canned milk always is used, even in coffee.

Water is the great danger. One dare not drink water save that bottled and sealed in Europe, or freshly boiled in China. I have had doctors declare that dysentery germs frequently are taken into the mouth by a person brushing his teeth in unboiled water. It is because of this danger that some men brush their teeth only in wine.

Yesterday a doctor warned me against touching my face. "You wash your hands and dry them. A moment later you touch your lips. In that moment you may have picked up enough dysentery germs to lay you flat for a year—possibly to lay you flat forever.

"But," he went on, "it makes no difference what precaution you take, sooner or later you'll have dysentery. You catch it in ways you can never imagine. In my own home, where my wife personally supervises the kitchen, my little girl who never tastes anything away from home, suddenly collapsed with dysentery. She was in the hospital two months."

The native Oriental is not so subject to dysentery as is the European. And the Westerner who lives for many years in the East finally builds up a partial im-

munity, though usually such an intestinal condition is bought and paid for by years of disorder before the adjustment is completed.

There have been a number of persons in Peiping who have been sweet to me. My room is full of flowers and since I've been allowed visitors there has been some one here most of the time. Wu, my rickshaw boy, never leaves me. One of the internes, a chap whose older brother was at Oberlin with me, has done everything to make my stay as comfortable as possible. But, excepting my nurse and Wu, my greatest pal is a twelve-year-old Chinese lad in the next room.

This boy had tuberculosis of the bone and they had to take off his foot and ankle. He is getting better now and is allowed to roll himself about in a wheel chair. Every morning, immediately the barber leaves me, I hear the boy puffing along in his chair. He turns in at my door and unfailingly says: *"Hoa-bo-hoa?"* which means "Are you feeling well this morning?" And I answer: *"Bo-hoa,"* which is Chinese slang and means "Absolutely rotten." The lad almost keels out of his chair every time I answer him.

Then he wheels himself on into the room. My nurse brings the checkerboard; the boy and I get down to the serious business of the day. He plays a good game and we have great pleasure in the combats.

Yesterday morning he shot a big lump into my throat. He brought his little sister to see me. The child—she couldn't have been more than eight—was

dressed in brilliant silks. Four pink blossoms were placed in her hair. She came to the edge of my bed, bowed, and with a mighty dignity handed me a single rosebud. Then she clambered into a chair and with slow-blinking eyes watched her brother and me play checkers. There was a solemn stateliness about her. There was a winsome childishness. She was my Oriental dream princess. I adored her.

Everything, I suppose, is going all right, though the doctors say it will be some time before I travel again. I'm weak and I've lost an awful lot of weight and blood. The blood is what troubles me. I can stand the pain, but I can't stand the blood. It excites me to know that I lie here and bleed—bleed internally, bleed constantly. Yet I suppose I should be satisfied. One night I overheard a doctor say I couldn't make it through until morning. Frankly, at that time I didn't much care.

But now that most of the *Sturm und Drang* is over, I see no reason in not recovering. I think that's what I'll do—though I can't be sure, for, as Oliver Wendell Holmes once remarked, "It's almost impossible for a man to believe in the saving grace of God when the man has something wrong below his belt."

XXIV

I SHOULD like so much, Dad, for you to visit me. I've set up housekeeping in Peiping.

When I first arrived I took quarters at the Grand Hotel de Pekin, a most excellent place. Then I went away to Nankow and the Great Wall. When I returned from there I didn't go back to the hotel, but stopped for a time at another place. One day a very dear friend called on me. I met Mr. A. H. Ginman, one of the directors of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, Ltd., of London, at the American Club in Tokyo. He spends much of his time in the East, is a delightful man and a grand bridge player —took a number of yen off me by the subtlety of his play. He arrived in Peiping after I did, heard I was in town and called on me. We chatted for a while, then he announced he was returning to Japan. He offered me his Peiping home and his staff of servants.

"But, Mr. Ginman, I couldn't think of doing that."

"Don't think of it—just do it. I'm sailing in three days. Carry on my house exactly as if I were still in Peiping."

After a vast argument he finally agreed I should pay the servants and care for all current expenses. Once that was decided, I promised to take over. It was awfully kind of him and I shall never forget his

courtesy. Because of it I am now installed in my own home at 25 Tai Yung Iping Hutung! I have only nine servants to care for me!

And so I vagabond around the world.

The house is of one story, as is customary, and is built partly of wood and partly of brick. The furnishings are mainly European. The ornaments and decorations are mainly Chinese. In this house I am now living, alone except for the servants.

My porter is ready any hour of the day or night I sound the outer bell. Instantly he swings open the wooden doors. He doffs his little circular hat. "Master," he says, and bows very low.

In the kitchen is a Number One, or chief cook, who is infinitely above mere genius. What he can do with a pigeon or a pheasant is a mystery. His soufflé is but an aroma and a memory. There is also a Number Two cook. This man peels potatoes, washes dishes and performs the less artistic tasks.

My Number One house-boy, besides speaking and understanding a little English, is a truly intelligent fellow. Each morning he draws my bath, sharpens my razor, lays out my clothes, and makes life as pleasant as possible. He waits on me at table, taking care to hide himself behind the tall screen in the corner after each course is served. He watches through a crack and comes out when the dishes are to be changed. At any time I ring or call him, Li, the perfect servant, appears to minister to my desires.

There is a Number Two house-boy. He presses my

clothes, blacks my shoes and goes errands on a dilapidated bicycle.

There are three nondescripts. I have yet to find out their exact duties. I'm told they make the grate fires, sweep up, and care for the garden. So far as I can see they do nothing but squat behind straw mats and watch me from morning until night. Let me reach for a book lying an inch beyond my fingers, they race out to hand it to me. Let me begin to move my chair the better to catch the sun, they fall over each other to do it for me. Let me call, "Boy," there's a stampede. Li almost invariably hears and comes on the double, the tails of his long white coat snapping about his ankles. Yet regardless of how fast he comes, the three gentlemen of the mats have charged away to summon him.

Then finally there is the last of my servants, my rickshaw boy, the one and only, the inimitable Wu, and may God love him.

Undoubtedly you're confident I'm preparing my entrance into some Chinese poorhouse. But hear me—

The servants feed and clothe themselves. I have nothing to do with that. They provide their own uniforms.

The porter receives five dollars a month.

The Number One cook gets ten dollars a month.

The Number Two cook gets nothing. Indeed, he pays Number One fifty cents a month to permit him to be present and learn the mysteries of cooking the strange food eaten by foreigners.

Li, the Number One house-boy, gets ten dollars a month.

The Number Two house-boys gets five dollars.

The three mat-squatters each receive two dollars a month.

Wu receives fifteen dollars. That is more than ordinarily is paid, but Wu is no ordinary servant. He is my counselor and my friend.

For nine excellent servants I pay fifty-one dollars a month.

These men don't know for how long they are hired. I could leave them in the morning, pay them to the minute of their service, and they would not object. They are accustomed to such an arrangement.

Yesterday morning for breakfast I had orange juice, two poached eggs, toast, tea and marmalade. For lunch there was beef tea, part of a chicken and a cream custard. With tea were cakes as well as toast—and how my cook can make toast! He makes it thin without its being warped, crisp without its losing its flavor. Dinner consisted of soup, a teal, a bit of beef prepared with vegetables, a soufflé, a taste of gorgonzola and some beneficent coffee.

This morning Li brought me the bill for yesterday's food. The total amount was seventy-two cents.

This production of the daily bill is a ritual. The cook enters in the grocer and butcher's book what he has bought and charged the day previous. In a smaller book he writes what he has bought and paid

for out of his pocket. Both books are brought me each morning by Li.

Before Mr. Ginman left for Japan he explained that all Chinese servants, working on a system of "squeeze," steal a few pennies each day.

"A little is all right," he explained. "It always has been, it always will be and you must allow it. Besides stealing directly from you, the servants have arranged with the Chinese grocers to receive a personal rebate of 10 per cent on all purchases. This rebate the servants pocket. Every one understands and no sensible foreigner attempts to avoid either form of the recognized graft."

Then he went on to tell that an Englishman once opened a food-stuff store in Peiping. The announcement was made that the usual 10 per cent squeeze would not be paid the Chinese cooks. Naturally foreigners began to patronize the new store. For a few days everything went well. Then the meats began to taste bad. In answer to complaints, the house-boys shook their heads and sorrowfully remarked: "Sad, master, but new grocer no very good. He no can do." Then the eggs proved unpleasant. Bits of lint got into the sugar. Finally the housekeepers gave it up. They went back to the Chinese grocers and allowed the servants their petty graft.

"The grocery 10 per cent is out of your hands. You have nothing to do with that. But stealing on the daily bills you must watch. Let them get away with a little. That's expected. But don't let them

think they can take advantage of you. Once they believe that—they'll rob you."

The first morning Li presented his bill I looked it over carefully. On the previous day I had eaten nine eggs at each meal! Furthermore, this record showed, I had eaten one chicken, one pheasant and one pigeon for both lunch and dinner! I returned it to him.

"I won't pay it," I said.

Li went away and came back. "Have make mistake, master," he said, and gave me a second bill. It was exactly half of the first. The amount was still absurd.

"Won't pay it," I said, handing it to him.

Li grinned and nodded his head. "All right, master," he said, "how much will you pay?"

As soon as we came to this understanding, we began to figure and arrived at what was fair. Since that first morning they have stolen from me only the customary few pennies.

* * *

After coming from Japan, where exceedingly few persons speak understandable English, one is delighted in China to find fluent English spoken by numerous hotel employees and shopkeepers. Even the underlings of the street, rickshaw boys and petty merchants, speak enough English to be understood.

The Chinese themselves are up against a great internal barrier of language. There is the ancient style in which the classics were written, there is the literary style of the present, the business style of to-day, and,

finally, the spoken language. The spoken language is the greatest curse: it is divided into hundreds of dialects.

A man from the South cannot understand the speech of a Northerner. A traveler from the interior cannot be understood in Shanghai. Indeed, it is not unusual for the Chinese when talking with each other to resort to English. Recently a treaty between Japan and China was drawn both in Chinese characters and in English, a clause being inserted that any doubt of meaning should be settled by the English version.

Foreign residents in China commonly make use of "Pidgin-English," an unwritten patois—*pidgin* means "work," ergo, "Pidgin-English" is English that works, that accomplishes its purpose.

The first foreigners who settled in China knew nothing of the language. In their trading they spoke English. Thus the native shopkeepers picked up enough foreign words to form a weird vocabulary. They molded it into sentences according to idioms of the Chinese language. The result is both amazing and amusing, and yet it works; it makes it possible for foreigners to care for common needs and wants. Soon after one arrives in China he begins talking Pidgin-English. In a short time he is using startling words arranged in wondrous order.

A soldier who had fought for a Tientsin general told me he was tired of war. He objected to being ruled by a Canton general and would be pleased when the Nanking government fell. He declared there was too

much graft in Nanking. Only the death of the Canton general would satisfy him. After that, perhaps, the government might be united under one ruler.

This is how he said it: "Just now have catchee plenty trouble war man. I belong Tientsin man. Very glad if this Canton Number One man can catchee die. Losee head and makee finish this before time. He all putee money pocket side. Any man catchee plenty angry this fashion Number One. Spose America side this fashion, no proper! Must make kill and look see proper Number One man."

A hostess told me the other evening of a Chinese servant who had spoken to her about a lady, a friend of hers. The lady at one time had lived in Chefoo. The Chinaman had known her there. When later he saw her in Peiping he was confused and troubled.

"Missee," he said to my hostess, "just now have come this side to look see you. I before have savee this missee Chefoo side. She have catchee sick, missee?"

"No," answered my hostess, "she no have catchee sick. Why you think she catchee sick?"

"Oh, before her belly very, very big. Just now very small. No can makee change this fashion if no catchee sick."

Considerably above Pidgin-English is the language written by imperfectly educated Chinese, though that frequently possesses an unintentional humor.

"I am Wang," wrote an applicant for a position. "It is for my personal benefit that I write to ask for a

position in your honourable firm. I have a flexible brain that will adapt itself to your business, and in consequence bring good efforts to your honourable selves.

"My education was impressed upon me in the Peiping University, in which place I graduated Number One. I can drive a typewriter with good noise, and my English is great.

"My references are of the good, and should you hope to see me they will be read by you with great pleasure. My last job has left itself from me, for the reason that the large man is dead. It was on account of no fault of mine.

"So, honourable sirs, what about it? If I can be of big use to you I will arrive on some date that you should guess. (Signed) S. L. Wang."

The classic example of all spoken or written Chinese-English is the declaration of a Chinaman in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Celestial announced that in his family were "four adults and six adultresses."

* * *

This morning for the first time I fully appreciated the meaning of the expression, "Hog-tied."

While out for a walk I saw many droves of swine being hurried along in one direction. I followed to see where and why this assemblage. A Chinese pork market was in full cry; there I understood the true and full meaning of the hobble.

The hog was tumbled over on his back by two

heavy boys. Always a brisk wrestle followed, but always the pig was worsted. Then his feet were bunched and tied together, something like a four-leaf clover. Afterward he was left on his side to jump and squeal and add his disturbance to the general hubbub.

Buyers walked by, around and on the hogs, stooping to feel their fatness and to examine their condition. After an animal had been purchased, two boys would thrust a long pole beneath the tied feet and swing piggy into the air; there he would wave back and forth as they trotted away with the ends of the pole resting on their shoulders.

Those buyers who want quick action have only to say the word. Butchers grab a pig by the tail, swing him up a bit, stick in a knife, twist it, then draw it forth. Small boys with drinking cups fight to catch the blood.

* * *

Ice used in China is natural and is cut from canals during the winter. In summer the city refuse is dumped into these canals. A green scum collects over the top of the stagnant water. It is from this water that the ice is cut in the cold months. To me the real mystery of the Orient is why all Chinamen aren't dead.

The ice is cut and placed in large cellars dug to a depth of thirty feet. There it is buried to await the coming of warm weather.

The most interesing feature of the ice business is

the delivery of small orders. A boy ties a rope about the middle of a block of ice, swings the rope over his shoulder and walks away: the ice drags through the dust and filth of the street.

* * *

The professional story-teller is one of the most interesting of all the street entertainers.

Sometimes he works alone, sometimes with a partner. When there are two, one sits behind and aimlessly plucks a stringed instrument like a long-necked banjo. He plays until a crowd gathers, and sometimes after the story has begun; though, apparently, his accompaniment has nothing to do with the story except that in tempo he follows the lead of the speaker.

The speaker often has a tom-tom before him. At intervals he pauses in his talk and whacks the tom-tom, then hastens on with his yarn. He works himself into great excitement. He waves his arms, creeps out into the crowd and lowers his voice, suddenly jumps and shouts aloud, speaks with exciting rapidity and then, just before the dénouement, just when every one is most interested, he stops and refuses to continue until a collection has been taken and has proved satisfactory.

Always he is successful: even the children delve into their loose pockets to drag forth the necessary copper.

* * *

Begging in China is a profession. In some cities beggars are organized and operate with a thorough-

ness, a perspicacity and success amazing to those outside the secret.

In most of the larger towns there is one beggar recognized as leader of the guild. Wise shopkeepers buy immunity by paying this man a small sum of money each week. All donations are put in the common purse and distributed among the beggars. The donors are assured that their places of business will not be visited by the mendicants.

And woe to the shopkeeper who refuses to pay!

Many Chinese beggars are blind. They work in lots of six and eight, being bound one to the other by a rope. A small boy is employed to act as guide. He leads the line of evil-smelling, festering creatures into a shop, the owner of which has refused tribute. Straightway they set up their whine. It is continued for half an hour. The shopkeeper goes about his business and ignores them. The cadgers finally squat on their haunches and wait, content in the surety of their ultimate victory.

A customer comes into the shop. Immediately a howl goes up. The beggars cluster about the prospective buyer; they rub themselves against him and pluck at his garments. The shopkeeper, to protect and retain his customer, invariably hands over a few coppers. The beggars file out. But next day they return. They repeat the performance—repeat it until the shopkeeper buys immunity.

There is another profitable trick practiced by these rogues. One of them goes into a shop and cuts him-

self. He remains in the place bleeding over everything he can reach, until the owner gives him a few coins. Then he runs to another shop and there bleeds until he's paid to leave.

Voluntary mutilation is not uncommon in China. The poor lop off an arm or leg for the purpose of exciting sympathy and increasing their possibility of receiving alms.

Recently I saw a beggar whose leg was encased in a plaster cast. He was sitting in the middle of a main passageway at a street fair. The top of the cast was lifted. He wailed aloud and pointed to the decaying flesh.

A foreigner is always considered a fat pigeon for mendicants in China. I have stepped from my rickshaw and in a moment have been surrounded by beggars. Here a small boy thrusting the stump of his arm in my face. There a horrible old harridan pointing at the sores upon her upper lip. Beside her a man, partly covered with filthy rags, draws his hand across his face and pulls down his eyelids to expose empty sockets. And all of them saluting me as "Master," "Honorable," "Noble," and whining their prayer for food.

One night I was walking near "The Bridge of Heaven," the center of the district most frequented by thieves and cutthroats. A beggar accosted me. I ignored him. He followed me, bowed every third step and held out his bowl for alms. He followed for half a mile, and never for an instant faltered

in his supplications. He and his brotherhood work on the theory that their power to annoy is greater than the patience of the person being importuned.

But if a beggar loses and gives in, he calls down every curse of heaven and a filthy hell upon the one who has refused him alms. Twice I've tried to have Chinese gentlemen translate for me. They either wouldn't or couldn't; they declared they didn't understand the argot. Wu, after much persuasion, finally consented. Both of us were embarrassed bv what he told me.

The most subtle of all stratagems used by the beggars was shown me one night by Wu. He and I were visiting the brothels patronized by rickshaw boys, servants and street peddlers.

Each house was a square, built about an open court. The sides of the court were composed of tiny stalls. Before the entrance of each stall was a curtain. Inside burned a lamp that was never extinguished. A merry breeze, playing in and out the courtyard, frequently, in prankish mood, flicked the curtain aside or raised it high in the air. The searching rays of the lamp burned steadily.

Every customer who entered the courtyard was taken by the *maître d'hôtel* to a stall. There he was allowed to sit on the edge of the bed. The curtain was held back and the girls filed past. As each went by, her number was called.

"Number six," the master of ceremonies would cry. "Number three. Number eight. Number five. Num-

ber two. Number nine. Number seven. What number do you want?"

And the beggars sat crouched in a dim corner.

When the guest had made his choice and had paid his ten cents, the total cost of his visit, his inamorata was sent in to him.

Still the beggars sat crouched in the dim corner.

But after a time one of them would come forth. He would squat outside the curtain and begin his whine. Slowly at first and in a low voice. Gradually his curious tempo would increase. The pitch of his voice would be raised. He would come nearer the curtain. If he received no gift he would thrust in his hand and arm, and his sharp whine would rise through a crescendo almost to bursting.

Sometimes the beggar would receive a blow on the wrist and, howling, would jerk back his arm. Usually, though, his persistency would be rewarded. He would receive a few coppers, then retire to the shadows and there await the arrival of another gallant.

XXV

DEAREST Annette: Writers who love a phrase more than fact often have written of the bound feet of Chinese women. They have called them "Lilies of the daughters of Cathay." The Chinese themselves praise the *kin lien,* "The Golden Lilies." They consider a minute foot a mark of gentility. Yet one who has seen such a foot knows it to be a hideous distortion, cruelly conceived and brutally executed.

The origin of the practice is debated by Chinese scholars. Some declare it was begun centuries ago by ladies of the court who wished to lessen the embarrassment of the reigning empress: she had club feet. Others say it became popular because women desired delicate feet. It is written that one man instructed his wife to bind her feet until they resembled the new moon. Perhaps that was the beginning of the custom. The reason most commonly given is that husbands originated the practice to prevent their wives from senseless gadding. Some Chinese are so inhumanly wise as to suggest that if this reason be the correct one, then the custom is laudable.

The popularity of binding women's feet is on the wane, though the practice is by no means stamped out. There are thousands of baby girls this minute suffering the agonies of the first bandage.

There is no definite age at which the feet are first bound. Usually the bandages are put on when the child is five or six years old, though often the deformity is not started until later. Sometimes the parents wait until the little girl is ten years old. The older the child, the more exquisite are her tortures.

The distortion is caused by bandages wrapped repeatedly about the foot. These bindings are seldom removed. They are essential for walking. A Chinese woman could not cross the room without them.

In binding the foot, the big toe is forced upward and backward. The other toes are bent downward and lapped under the forepart of the foot. The instep is arched out of all proportion. The heel bone is brought into direct line with the leg bones. In walking, the foot has three points of contact: the heel, the end of the metatarsal bone of the big toe and the two smallest toes bent under the foot. It is not uncommon to see feet from three and a half to four inches long.

If you will walk on your heels, turning your feet well out, you will then exactly imitate the pitiful shuffle of these women sacrificed to a stupid practice. Many older women make use of a cane or umbrella. Some are forever preceded by a servant on whose shoulder the crippled one rests a sustaining hand. It is particularly painful to watch an elderly woman, an old mother who has become fat, as she struggles along upon bent and twisted bones.

It is said that the bindings cause a child of five or

"GOLDEN LILIES OF CATHAY"

six to suffer for only a short time, though it is admitted she sobs through many nights. Later she becomes accustomed to the bandages. After two or three years she is forgetful of her feet and lives and plays like other little girls. On streets of Chinese cities one sees hundreds of these deformed children as they race here and there with friends whose feet are normal.

Since being in China I have talked with several doctors, both Chinese and European, about foot binding. They all agree that no serious physical ailment can be traced directly to it, though some declare the unnatural walking posture affects certain internal organs. Strangely enough, the circulation in the foot remains virtually normal. Nature, of course, provides thick growth of skin, corns and other protective covering. The muscles of the calf fall almost into disuse and the leg tapers sharply from the knee to the ankle, yet there is no marked weakening of the limb.

Foot binding is not limited to the upper classes. Old crones who pry with hungry fingers through garbage spurned by street dogs have feet that could be placed in the palm of a boy's hand. In rural districts the endless tread of the handmill is walked by women whose feet could be thrust into a wineglass.

The most degrading act of a Chinese woman is to exhibit her feet naked, without their bandages. If one desired to go into a Chinese brothel and photograph nude women, all arrangements could be made easily and quickly. But even in human cesspools the

women refuse to show their feet. In order to photograph a bound foot it is necessary to pay a sum twenty times as great as if one wished to photograph the otherwise entirely naked body.

The present government has issued its edict against the custom of foot binding. The practice is forbidden by law. Yet every one knows it's a law which can never be enforced. A gentleman who lives a short distance from me in Peiping told me that soon he was to put the feet of his little daughter into their first bandages. I asked him why. He shrugged his shoulders and looked out of the window. That was all the answer I received. Naturally I didn't argue the point.

A week later I dined in his home. I left about midnight. A servant, hurrying from a side passage to escort us to the outer gate, allowed a door to stand open. From a room upon the passage I heard the low, moaning sobs of a child in agony.

. . .

I have yet to find a Chinaman who has heard of chop suey. The Chinese know absolutely nothing of the dish and they never eat it.

Foreigners say the conglomeration was invented by a German waiter in San Francisco. Its only relation to the Celestial Empire is the name chop suey. That really is Chinese. It means "anything and everything."

. . .

The Chinese Punch and Judy man, or, as Wu calls him, "Man talkee sing-song," carries his show slung on the ends of a long pole, just as street peddlers carry their shops. His particular method of announcing approach is by sound of a drum and gong which dangle in air and bang and clap as the showman walks. Periodically he throws back his head and emits a great bellow which slowly modulates to a long howl.

In the hutung outside my home a dozen children forever play in the dust. Each time I appear they congregate. Then they all say, "Goo-byeee." Regardless of whether I'm coming or going, they say "Goo-byeee." They wait until I answer "Goo-byeee," when they scatter like rabbits. They hide behind posts and doorways to giggle and peep.

One afternoon not long ago I arrived home to see the children in the hutung peering with longing eyes at the sing-song man. I told Wu to have the man come into my garden and to invite the children in. I sat in a chair. The boys and girls squatted on their haunches in a small huddle.

The showman let down the pole from his shoulders. Out of the compartments fastened to the pole he drew his equipment and set up his theatre. When he had finished he had built a tiny stage upon four pillars. A dirty blue denim curtain hung from the proscenium to the ground. Behind the curtain the entertainer took his position.

The opening of the show was a gallant clashing and banging of cymbals—the children huddled closer to-

gether and their eyes sparkled. The sing-song man began to blow upon a whistle. There was an extra-loud blast—a singing girl appeared. She was resplendently arrayed in fine silks and jewels of amazing size. She made a graceful bow and began to sing. She went through her program of two songs and went off stage, not forgetting to give three curtsies in answer to the wild plaudits of the children and myself.

Two more singers took their turn, then Punch and Judy appeared. They put up a magnificent fight. Their little arms whirled about and cracked down upon their stubborn heads. It was the best Punch and Judy battle I've ever seen, save, perhaps, the daily fight that goes on across the Tiber from Hadrian's Tomb.

The show was ended by a man's having a fierce struggle with a tiger. And the man was ended by the tiger swallowing him. When the sing-song man appeared from beneath his curtain he was paid fifteen cents. He was delighted, for such a sum represented wealth to him. My guests left me at the gate with hundreds of "Goo-byeees." And now when I appear I'm greeted as if the emperor rode forth to view his kotowing subjects.

* * *

The Chinese are especally fond of watermelons. They serve them at all meals, even breakfast.

One has to be careful when buying melons. They are sold by the pound and a favorite trick of peddlers

is to shove a small pump into the fruit and fill the center with water, thus increasing the weight.

. . .

In London, Annette, I can no more stay away from Charing Cross Road and its bookstores than a drunkard can ignore a grog shop. In Paris I can't forget the book-stalls along the left bank. Those temptations do not exist in Peiping. Yet I do not go untempted, for their place is taken by the lure of a precious stone.

Chinese emperors have recorded their poems on tablets of jade. Ancient rulers worshiping before the altar of the moon wore girdles adorned with white jade. On the tongue of the dead a bit of jade, carved as a cicada, is placed; the emblem is of resurrection. T'ang Jung-tso declared the magic powers of heaven and earth ever combine to form perfect results: so the pure essence of hill and water become solidified into jade.

The price of the stone in recent years has risen until only the wealthy, or the foolish, can afford it. This swift increase has been brought about by old deposits nearing exhaustion and no new ones being discovered. Then, too, jade has become a vogue. Women of Paris and New York are wearing it. Which means that in a few years women of St. Louis and Manchester will be seeking it. In the meantime shrewd buyers have sent the prices soaring.

Yesterday I held a pair of ear pendants. They were

not so large as the last joint of your little finger, but they were wondrously carved. The dealer asked four thousand dollars for them. I didn't hold them long.

I have seen one piece the size of a silver dollar. The carving was more delicate than if fairy workmen had spent centuries toiling on the design. The price was ten thousand dollars. Thumb rings, plain bands of jade brought down from days when they served as guards for the archer's thumb, frequently fetch five thousand dollars. Some sell for twice that amount. Necklaces of jade have sold for more than one hundred thousand dollars.

At the "Jade Market," a muster of rapscallions at every sunrise, I've picked up several exquisite pieces. I have two gloriously matched bracelets for you. They are green jade, translucent, and with light playing through them like the dawn burying her shimmering spears in the bosom of the sea.

There is another weird gathering in Peiping that I've attended frequently. It is universally called the "Thieves' Market." It is held by torchlight and it lasts from midnight until daybreak. It is the most unhallowed assemblage I've ever seen.

There I found a white jade cup, enravishingly carved. There I discovered a pair of crickets, cut from green jade. They are miracles; the legs cause fine spun silk to seem coarse and swollen. And there, from a ragged old man, obviously a filcher, I bought the most seductive piece of all. It's a tiny gong of

purest white jade, worthy to toll the funeral of Cobweb, Moth or Peaseblossom.

Besides the Jade Market and the Thieves' Market there is Jade Street—heaven help me! There, day after day, I squander my money.

This morning a dealer showed me a monkey carved from jade, though I could have sworn it was emerald. The entire figure was less than one-quarter of an inch in height. Under the magnifying glass it showed perfect. The legs were rigid, the arms taut, the features set in a glaring grimace. It was a prize to be placed in a golden casket lined with satin, soft and white as the new moon. Of course I couldn't afford to buy it.

I did rather well in regard to this particular temptation. I was almost three hundred yards from the shop before I gave up and went back to buy the thing.

I shan't tell you what I paid for any of these pieces. You would think me crazy . . . I know I am.

. . .

I've just returned from visiting a shop where winter coats and caps are made.

The pieces of fur are received in crates and are protected by a white preserving powder. Small boys unpack the pieces, slap them together, and envelop themselves in a dust which leaves them white as tiny millers. Workmen place the dusted pieces on a large table and begin the difficult task of matching them. The cheaper coats are made of brown fox and cat;

the cat gives the white so much desired by the Chinese.

These skilled laborers measure exactly the space to be filled by the proper fur. When the match is satisfactory, they sew the skins together. They work from seven in the morning until ten at night. Their pay is thirty-five cents a day. They work seven days a week.

. . .

One of the few undeserted temples in Peiping is the home of the Lamas, a monastery in which devotees worship Buddha with singular ceremonies brought down from Tibet and Mongolia. The *Gompa,* their cloister, is justly one of the show places of the city.

The monks wear robes and mantles of bright colors, yellow being the most common. Their hats could have been taken directly from the wardrobe of Lord Nelson.

Twice each day they assemble in dark halls and worship with barbaric chants. The rest of the time they blow fifteen-foot horns in funeral processions, they mend the idols about the temples, they practice violent dances, or they entertain themselves privately in manners best not investigated too carefully.

These most holy men are gracious in their welcome of visitors. At first, one wonders about such an eager reception. One soon discovers the cause.

In every oratory is an altar. Before each altar are placed dozens of metal vessels with oil and wick. At

the approach of a visitor the monk interrupts his yawn, grabs his beads and begins to tell them. Then he lights a candle and gives it to you. With the candle you light a wick in one of the small vessels of oil. The monk mumbles a prayer. The result is that you have good luck and the monk gets a tip. One of these old rogues winked at me and smiled while he was praying. I gave him double. He, at least, was honest in his thieving.

Men visitors are allowed to enter the Temple of Passion, a chantry of the sacred institution. Once you are inside, the doors are closed. The curtains are drawn. The monks peer out as if afraid the Father Superior might discover them in their sin of exposing inner secrets to an unbeliever. When the drama has reached the proper climax, when the tourist is sufficiently impressed, the reverend brothers ask if the doors of the most holy shrines are to be opened. Naturally, the tourist says yes. Instantly he finds numerous palms thrust toward him. Into each he must drop a sizable coin. Then the junior abbot swings back the golden gate of the inner sanctuary. He bares the mysteries within.

Only they aren't mysteries. They're just filthy statues. I've seen exactly the same images in certain houses of Pompeii. Frequently I've viewed paintings and photographs of that nature when accosted by post-card boys of Paris and Marseilles.

The Temple of Passion houses numerous important behests in the Lama worship. In regard to them it

is said the brethren are excessively devout, the brethren and the small boys who act as attendants. Yet doctors have told me that this form of worship leads not to spiritual halos of fine gold, but to rheumatism and skin troubles and ailments of the flesh.

In the sanctuary across from the Temple of Passion stands the Buddha of War. On the table before the gigantic glass-eyed image—he is seventy-seven feet high—was spread the most tempting meal I've seen since coming to China.

"It's for the Buddha," answered the sacristan.

"Oh, yes," I said. "For the Buddha. That's right. But on days when the Buddha isn't very hungry—what happens to the food on those days?"

"After the Buddha is through with each meal it is eaten by the monks."

He failed to add: "That'll be ten cents, please." He merely held out his hand and accepted the coin.

While returning from innermost sanctums I asked to see the quarters where the holy brothers eat and sleep. That was taboo. That was impossible. But a quarter of a dollar got me a special dispensation. I was taken into rooms sumptuously furnished and adorned with innumerable ornaments.

"Not this," I said. "Not this show place. I want to see the real quarters. Where do you actually sleep?"

Absolutely impossible. Against all laws of the order. Couldn't possibly be done. . . . A half dollar did it.

Such filth and rottenness I've never seen or smelled.

The monks, having heard there was an easy mark in tow, began to flock around. They tried to sell me various *objets d'art*. One offered a picture he swore he had stolen from a temple in Tibet. He said he would take fifty dollars for it. I finally bought it for one dollar and eighty cents. Another offered bronze miniatures of the statues in the Temple of Passion. One filthy old blackguard insisted I purchase the human skull he carried cradled in his arm.

* * *

I happened to be in a Peiping hospital one day recently. While there I heard a woman screaming. I asked an interne what was wrong. He told me a Chinese woman had been brought in after having received treatment from four Chinese doctors. Their medicines had poisoned her and she was in critical condition.

"We'll get her over the poisoning all right," he said. "Our real worry is peritonitis."

"How could she get peritonitis from medicines?"

"Not from medicines. Not that at all. But the Chinese doctors have driven red-hot needles into her abdomen. That's one of their treatments."

In China, only a few patients see a doctor who has received Western training. All other patients summon or visit the most ridiculous mountebanks.

The native doctor is required to pass no examination. He needs no license. He is legally forced to

satisfy no qualifications. He suddenly announces he is a doctor. From that instant, Proteus-like, he is a doctor. When seeing a patient he assumes a most impressive dignity. Solemnly he feels the pulse, for there, he assures you, lies the secret of all illness. If he presses lightly on the left pulse near the hand, he determines the condition of the small intestines. If he presses heavily on the left pulse halfway to the elbow, he learns about the kidneys. Light pressure on the right wrist discloses any ailment of the stomach. Heavy pressure on the same spot reveals the health of the spleen.

After consulting the pulse, the Chinese doctor is ready to begin his treatment. But first he must reason about the disease. He talks at tremendous length, arguing various theories in a manner most impressive. He reasons entirely empirically, but no matter, he uses overpoweringly long words. Often he speaks of heat and cold and air and water and earth. After much talk he is prepared to prescribe.

The prescription frequently consists of a few oddments such as powdered deer horn and tiger's whiskers, snake skins, the shavings from the snout of a rhinoceros, a bit of pounded fossil, a moth or two, a pinch of powdered asbestos, the scrapings from an oyster shell and other ingredients best unmentioned.

Medicine is given on the theory of the bigger the quantity, the more effective the cure. The patient is forced to swallow quarts of liquids and great balls of mixed paste.

When all other devices don't kill, the medical man resorts to acupuncture. In acupuncture the human body is divided into small squares. Each square, or section of skin surface, is supposed to have direct relation with some internal organ. There are three hundred and sixty-seven squares, and, at the present minute, Chinese doctors are driving their needles into as many squares as they think advisable for the treatment of their patients.

There is no standard for either size or length of the needles, though the really smart doctors, those desirous of greatly impressing patients, carry needles two feet long. They have been known to drive these things entirely through the body. Sometimes they are made red-hot and are left in place for days after their insertion.

* * *

One of the most fascinating streets in Peiping is Embroidery Street. This squirmy little passage, at places only four feet wide, has embroidery shops thick upon either side. Owners and their assistants loiter before each entrance. At the approach of a rickshaw they stand in the middle of the way and insist the passenger descend.

"Come look see. No buy. Look see. Veree cheap. Look see."

In these shops are gorgeous silks and brocades and furs. Whenever I go into them there is unfailingly a struggle between my wants and my bank account. The

dealer draws out treasure after treasure. Each new one is more resplendent than the last. I sit there and covet.

These dealers in silks and jade have taken almost all my money. They know how to do it. They show me a superb mandarin coat. They ask only thirty dollars. They spread a table cover before me—I can see it on that long table in the corner of my library—and they stand back and wait. They know I'll ask the price. And they know that eventually I'll buy it for twenty-six dollars. They show me the most adorable little jacket. They know I must have it, because they realize it's almost worthy even of you.

As I'm leaving, the dealer hurries before me to the door. He waits until I'm upon him. Then suddenly he flings open a great square of crimson silk—there's a golden-tiger-rampant embroidered in the center, a tiger with claws like curving swords and a tail like the flaming tails of Samson's foxes.

"It was the battle flag of an old Manchu," the dealer says.

And how can I resist a battle flag of crimson silk with a golden-tiger-rampant?

And how am I to pay my hotel bills?

* * *

Here's great news, *chérie*. There's hope for the Orient, after all. I see by the morning paper that the government of China is not to endure any more foolishness. A decree has just been issued: "All magistrates

will be executed who are discovered accepting bribes of more than one thousand dollars."

. . .

When traveling, Annette, one sometimes meets a person from a story book. Such people couldn't really exist, you know; yet there they are, across the table from you, telling you about little happenings in their lives—happenings that are the same as those in your days and mine.

I had to cross an ocean to meet this girl. I had to come to the heart of China to see an epilogue to a great world drama. For a moment it has made me quite forget the Orient. I first saw her a week ago—I'll tell you about it.

XXVI

I WAS attracted to her first because she wore a monocle. Then I decided she was the most beautiful girl in the room.

"And yet I'm not sure," I added, in the same instant.

Perhaps her attraction for me was the calm manner she watched the dancers. There was quiet assurance, there was dignity, there was unobtrusive nobility in her appearance that night in the Grand Hotel de Pekin. She was a patrician, an aristocrat. I looked at her and thought of long corridors with floors of marble. I thought of great high-ceilinged rooms, brilliantly lighted. I thought of men in court dress, their breasts gleaming with decorations. I saw officers erect in their resplendent uniforms. I saw women with tiaras. I saw all that—and more—when I walked into the ballroom and saw that girl.

In the morning a tourist ship had docked at Tanku. The passengers had arrived at Peiping late in the afternoon. Most of them were English. After dinner I entered the ballroom. I saw the girl with the monocle. Ordinarily a monocle would mar the appearance of a beautiful woman. But this monocle and this girl completed each other. They were *en rapport.* The monocle belonged to her, as she sat erect and

MISS TSAI

looked about with the unostentatious pride possessed only by one born into the old régime.

Suddenly I realized I was staring at her. More, I realized she had seen me staring. I was sorry I had been rude and I went away to the bar.

There was one other man in the room. We began to talk. I found he was a member of the party from the tourist ship. We finished our drinks; then I drank with him and he drank with me. I learned he was a Cambridge man. I told him I had been at Oxford. We chatted pleasantly until the bottoms of our glasses were barren. He suggested we return to the ballroom.

"I'll introduce you if you like," he said.

I assured him I should be pleased. I confess I was thinking only of the girl who sat alone.

"I say," he exclaimed, "my name's Weston—T. Phillips Weston."

I introduced myself.

At the entrance of the ballroom I glanced quickly toward the girl with the monocle. She was still there. I was glad. Weston presented me to a friend and I danced with her.

"Most of you on the cruise are English, aren't you?" I asked.

"Most of us, though a few passengers joined the ship at Marseilles and at Cairo."

"You're a merry party," I remarked. "That is, except the girl over there. She seems rather lonely."

"Which girl do you mean?"

"The one alone—the one with the monocle."

"Oh—why, yes."

That was all she said. We danced for a time without speaking. Then the music ended. A moment after, Weston found me and led me away.

"I'll present you to one of our party," he said, "who has a brother at Oxford."

I would rather have met the girl who sat alone, the girl who for me dwarfed the ballroom, but I couldn't tell Weston. I couldn't presume on his courtesy. I danced with the girl whose brother was at Oxford. We talked of England and of the University. I congratulated myself on having met Weston and on having been admitted to his company.

"You're an exceptionally jolly crowd of tourists," I said. Then I added: "Even if one member of your party is rather left out."

"Who's that?" my partner asked.

"The girl behind you. The girl with the monocle."

I felt her stiffen in my arms. "But she's not a member of our party." The words came fast.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I thought she was on the cruise."

"She is."

I waited for her to go on, but she said no more. I risked another question.

"She's traveling alone?"

"I think not. I think the elderly woman with her is an aunt. Though, naturally, I really couldn't say."

As I danced I asked myself why she should have answered so abruptly, almost curtly. If she merely

didn't know, that I could understand. But she had phrased her answer and had spoken in a manner to cause me to perceive an antipathy, a resentment.

For a moment I thought perhaps the girl with the monocle was the daughter of a fishmonger or of a shopkeeper. Then I was ashamed. I had lived in England five years. I had gone there with suspicion that all English are snobs and worse. I had arrived at Oxford believing I should need to guard myself against the affected superiority of my college mates. But I found my beliefs groundless and my fears chimerical. The English I had known had been sportsmen. I had learned to love them and their country. True, I had heard that sometimes Englishmen could be bitter, cutting, unkind, even brutal; but I didn't believe it. I was certain such talk was merely the expressed prejudice of those who had never pierced the national formality.

After the third dance, Weston and I wandered on to the veranda. We finished our cigarettes and started back into the ballroom.

"Look here, Weston," I said, "you won't think me too infernally presumptuous if I ask a favor."

"Certainly not."

"See the girl over there in the monocle?" He didn't answer and I hurried on. "Would you mind presenting me?"

I saw him rub his fingers across the ball of his thumb. Three times he did it. When he looked at me he was smiling rather miserably.

"Jove," he said, "but I hope you won't think me too damned rude if I beg off. You won't mind, I'm sure. I'd just rather not. Sorry."

"Of course not," I answered, quickly. "It's quite all right."

Then I kept quiet and we stood there, both of us embarrassed. Suddenly Weston half pointed across the room.

"There's Lady Thornwell," he said.

I was presented to the little woman whose hair was entirely white. I asked for the dance. It was a waltz, and she waltzed beautifully. There was a smoothness and an ease which made dancing with her a pleasure.

"You'll love Peiping," I assured her. "I think it the most fascinating city I've ever visited."

"I've heard that. I've heard—"

"Lady Thornwell—pardon—I'm going to be very bold and perhaps rather rude." The girl with the monocle had risen and was walking toward the exit. She was tall and carried herself strictly erect. There was the natural dignity of the aristocrat. In her manner was a touch of calm indifference. To me she was superb, magnificent. "Would you mind telling me who is the girl just leaving? The girl wearing the monocle?"

"I'd rather not," Lady Thornwell answered. "I'd rather say nothing about her. But if you insist, I won't refuse. Her brother commanded the firing squad that shot Edith Cavell."

XXVII

NEVER, Mac, have I understood why you loved Mah Jongg. If you couldn't have played cards, there might have been some excuse for playing Mah Jongg. But on house parties I've seen you and three other supposedly sane persons refuse bridge or poker in order to babble about winds and flowers and dragons! It has rather puzzled me. Yet there must have been some justification for your love of the game. Certainly four hundred million Chinamen can't be wrong. And within recent years Mah Jongg has become the national gambling game of the Chinese.

Some of the Celestials say Mah Jongg—pronounced "Ma Chan," with both "a's" very broad—has been played in China for many centuries. They say the game in ancient times was not known by commoners. They say that there was an edict that restricted its enjoyment to the imperial family, princes and those of noble blood. This contention is probably false. There is no mention of Mah Jongg in early Chinese writings. There is no picture of the game in early Chinese painting, though the court artists were prone to portray every pleasure in which their royal patrons were wont to indulge.

Other students of the history of Mah Jongg say that the game was invented about fifty years ago by a

mathematician of Ningpo. They say that this wise and kindly old man, who was somewhat like Lewis Carroll in his love for games and puzzles, made up the one hundred and thirty-six pieces and evolved their usage for the amusement of his friends. But this claim of the Ningpo district cannot be proved.

The stories of the birth of "Sparrow," the English translation of Mah Jongg, are apocryphal.

In China the game is commonly played in houses of ill repute. A gentleman, wishing to entertain, may invite his friends to his own home; more often he rents a room in a brothel and asks his guests to assemble there. Men who would enter a brothel for no other purpose, have no hesitancy in going there for Mah Jongg. A Chinaman regards playing Mah Jongg in a seraglio exactly as Americans regard playing bridge at a club.

An inmate of the house acts as hostess. On the day of the game this girl receives a sum of money. With it she buys flowers, fruits, watermelon seeds, candies and tea. During the evening she passes the sweets and pours the tea. When play is ended she is given a present of five or ten dollars.

The less a Westerner says about Chinese understanding of Mah Jongg, the less the Westerner will be embarrassed; for the natives play with a speed and skill that to experienced Occidentals is uncanny. The Chinese use no flowers or seasons. They score none of the weird hands invented by Westerners. They

follow the simple method of speeding through to Mah Jongg; they do not waste time attempting to build up tremendous scores.

. . .

Two days ago I visited a Chinese madhouse. I was the guest of a doctor. Had I known what I was to see, I should never have gone. There are sights stamped upon my brain that will glow there forever, gaunt and hideous.

The rickshaw coolies ran at a good rate for almost an hour. Then they turned off the main road. They began to wind back and forth along streets so narrow there was hardly room for us to go forward. After a time they passed beyond the walls and into the open country. Finally they drew up before a building that once had been a temple.

Surrounding the place were walls of stone, eight feet high and two feet thick. The door was of heavy wood, studded with iron. As the doctor and I descended from our rickshaws the door swung open. Four guards greeted us. One of them took our cards and disappeared. A moment later he returned. He was followed by the Chinese director.

After we had bowed and had exchanged the usual compliments we were led to an open courtyard where the sun poured down its brilliance. First we saw a workroom where men labored at simple tasks. The room adjoining was filled with rows of benches. A blackboard hung upon the wall. In a third room

were straitjackets and brutal looking chairs with straps and bindings.

We entered a hall. Some thirty men sat there. They stared about them. Their eyes were vacant; their faces blank. One of them stood and bowed. He announced himself premier of the Ming dynasty. Another declared he was the Emperor Chin, builder of the Great Wall.

"And if you do not fall down and worship me I shall have you beheaded. No, I shall burn you in oil —the fate that should come to all barbarians."

A man near the door walked deliberately toward us. He bent forward and thrust out his hand. His fingers were crooked and tense.

"What are you doing here, you foreigner? Why have you come to look at us? Do you come to laugh because we are mad? Why are you here? Have you come to give us food? Will you increase our rice? Why are you here, you foreigner?"

We were led away and passed along a corridor. Through a grating in a thick wooden door I saw an old, old woman peering at us. Upon her face was a red blotch. She quietly swung open the door and stepped aside. We entered a courtyard at the back of which were rooms occupied by women.

As we were seen, a great screaming arose. One girl of twenty, her body abnormally developed and fiercely strong, threw herself against the window sill and shouted her hate. She flung out her arms and

cursed us. Then she collapsed and began to weep.

Another woman eluded her guard and ran toward us. She swore she would dig out the eyes of the white devil. Her nails were long. Her dirty white hair streamed out behind her. One of the guards caught her and carried her back to a cell.

From the outer yard we were led along passages where more violent patients are kept in individual compartments.

In a cell about four feet by six, a creature—they said it was a woman—crouched with knees under her chin. Her clothes were rags, for the guard said she would tear the strongest cloth. Her hair was entirely white and stood from her head in stiff, pointed tufts. Her lower jaw hung down. From it was a slow drip. Her eyes rolled. She crooned a soft lullaby. I learned it was the Chinese equivalent of our cradle song:

—nothing to fear
And angels of slumber are hovering near,
Then rock-a-bye, baby, mother is here.

I was told the woman forever sang little songs to the baby she had eaten.

In the director's office the doctor showed me chains and iron cuffs the use of which he had abolished. His pride was superb and justified.

"That was my first task," he said. "I had to break from old traditions in the treatment of lunacy. Two years ago men and women were thrown into irons when they showed a tendency to violence. Now there

is only the straitjacket and the chair. To be sure, they still are used, but only after more gentle agents have failed."

He told me the Government allowed him five hundred dollars a month. Then his shoulders went back and the gleam in his eyes battered hard at the walls of cynicism.

"I have been promised," he said, "that soon a large and adequate building will be erected. It will be near the Altar of the Moon, just outside the walls of the city. They have promised me thirty acres. Thirty acres," he repeated. His voice lowered, as he added, "I could do much with thirty acres."

He reached to a shelf and drew down a great book, strongly bound and richly illuminated. He opened it. "I," he declared, standing very erect and with his hand resting upon the pages of the book, "I am of the Buddhist faith."

I bowed my acknowledgment of the lonely glory and dignity of his soul. I bowed to his work and faith.

In the active love of that little Chinese doctor, whose collar was too large and whose coat was too tight, in his great yearning for thirty acres—My God, what couldn't he do with thirty acres!—and in his gentle determination to lay a true stone in the Eternal Temple, I saw an answer to the bitterness and doubts that forever call their Gorgon cries.

. . .

The homes of only the wealthy in China have Occidental plumbing. The expense of the installation of equipment for running water is beyond an ordinary purse.

The usual method of obtaining water is to have it supplied daily by men who visit wells, fill small handcarts and deliver to private homes. For this service the waterman is paid one dollar a month.

Sanitation is made possible by other men with similar carts. For a daily call they are paid one dollar a month.

* * *

There is a mixture in the Chinese character difficult for an Occidental to understand. The Chinaman has an enviable sense of humor. He is generous, thoughtful, and personally charming. Yet his nation is probably the most calloused of all.

On the street I saw a sick puppy dragging itself in the dust. He passed an open-air market where scores of men and women were carrying on business. A small girl kicked at the puppy. She missed it because she was poised to run. She went back, watched by men and women in the market, and kicked again. On her second effort she succeeded in sinking her toe into the puppy's throat. She ran to her mother and the pup toppled over backward. The Chinese grinned as they saw him struggle and heard him yelp.

American children tie tin cans to dogs' tails. Otherwise they prove their savagery. But it's doubtful if any modern nation outside the Chinese could assemble

a hundred men and women who would smile as they watched a small girl kick a sick puppy.

A short distance from where I live in Peiping a coolie hanged himself from a tree. Three days his body dangled there—mauve, then blue, then black. The wind swayed it. Dogs barked at it. Boys whirled it so it would entwine slowly, then spin rapidly as the rope unwound itself. For three days it dangled there. Officials did not wish to cut it down. If relatives could be found, the city would not have to pay funeral expenses. But there were no relatives. The police finally cut the rope. Then they cut down the tree—to destroy the evil spirits that had come to dwell there.

Foreigners who love the Chinese most, admit and bemoan the great callousness of a people companionable, entertaining and gracious.

* * *

After I get home, Mac, there will be hours and nights of talk. There are many things I'd rather tell you than write you. A few can be understood only if I sketch them.

A subject about which I've never read is the *sub rosa* art of China. There are stacks of books, I know, about porcelains and pottery, paintings and drawings of Celestial artists; but none about creations of certain very jovial gentlemen.

A few days ago I was in an art shop. I looked at pictures until I became a trifle weary. Then I bought

the one that had interested me: it's a most attractive thing, a falconer returning from the hunt. It's done all in greens and dull browns. I bought this and started out. The dealer stopped me. Would I care to see other pictures? Pictures not commonly exhibited?

They are amazing, absolutely amazing. I believe it was a handmaiden of Helen who boasted of twenty-two detours. Aretino, you remember, bemoaned his desolation because he could discover only sixteen. The Kama Sutra sings of one for each evening of the year, but the Kama Sutra permits trivial variations.

These Chinese artists show an inventive genius positively astounding. One studies the series with increasing wonder about the Oriental.

The dealer finally exhibited his *pièce de résistance.* It was a painting of a young Chinese plumber named Lee, and his girl at the seashore.

. . .

The barber of China does his work at the edge of any public highway.

He carries his shop on the ends of a pole supported upon his shoulder. He never cries out as do other street laborers, but signals his approach by sliding a rod through the jaws of great steel tweezers. There is a sharp "ping," then a shrill vibration similar to that of a jew's-harp or tuning fork.

When a customer presents himself, the barber steps to the side of the street or lane in which he happens to be walking, slips the pole from his shoulder, unhooks

the small stool from its fastening, and invites the gentleman to sit down.

At one end of the pole is a round container in the bottom of which smolders a charcoal fire. Directly above the fire is a copper bowl of water, supposed to be warm, and undoubtedly dirty. In this water the barber first washes the face of his customer.

The shaving is next. A Chinese razor is about four inches long, is wedged and shaped like a trowel. The barber hits it a few strokes on his strop, then, without the use of soap or lather, he begins scraping the chin of his victim. The first time I watched this operation I writhed, but the poor sufferer did not seem to object, though his beard was stiff enough to rasp beneath the barber's fingers.

After shaving the chin, the barber again washes his customer's face. Then the front and back of the head is shaved, care being taken not to cut the long hairs which form the queue. This head shaving also is done without soap or lather. Next the queue is unplaited and combed, a round wooden comb, utterly filthy, being used.

And now the Chinese barber begins the real subtleties of his profession. He draws out a series of wooden tools. In length and size they resemble bone knitting needles. At the end of one is attached a small bunch of bristles. Another is of steel, the end flattened and curved like a miniature scimitar. The tip of the third is bent back to form a tiny spoon or scoop.

The customer tilts his head to one side. The barber

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jabs his little tools into the ear, calmly gouging to painful depths. The finish of the performance is when the tiny brush is inserted, twirled about, and the débris, with a strange Oriental grace, is swept out.

After the ears, then the eyes. The barber puts dirty cotton on the end of one of his ear instruments. He bends back the lid of each eye and gives the ball and interior a brisk polish.

The barber finishes the performance by massaging the patient's body. This is done by pounding with the closed fist. The thumping is of such vigor that it can be heard at a considerable distance.

From shave to pounding, everything included, the cost is three cents.

* * *

Chinese women dress their hair in styles of surpassing beauty.

The older women follow the custom of their girlhood. They treat the hair with a gelatinous gum which causes it to remain fast against the head. They draw it taut and part it in the middle. It is arranged at the rear in attractive forms and arabesques. There, flowers of brilliant colors are thrust. Even an old grandmother may be made to appear fresh and young by the bright coloring in her coiffure.

Almost all the more stylish young women have shingled their hair. They draw it behind the ears, then draw a tiny tuft forward to loop upon their cheeks.

These Chinese girls with their slender, symmetrical figures, arrayed in gorgeous silks and satins, with eyes of black jade and hands like tinted lilies—any day they could launch a thousand ships and burn my topless tower of Ilium. I vow they are more startling than any women I've seen since you and I promenaded the foyer of the Paris Opera House.

* * *

But it's the hair of the children which most fascinates the traveler. These little bantlings rattling away in the dust of the hutungs, racing beside your rickshaw as they laugh and wave at you, grinning in a manner to cause even old Scrooge to forget his grouch, are adorned with most fantastic coiffures.

Small boys from seven to ten usually are shaved quite bald. Girls of that age wear their hair long. It's drawn and twisted, then wound with brilliant red and yellow cords. Sometimes only one of these little rods juts off from the head. Again there will be two, sticking out like a pair of horns. Because of the difficulty in dressing it, this arrangement, I'm told, is seldom disturbed. Night after night the child sleeps with the hard tufts standing away from the scalp.

The tiny children, though, are the ones whose hairdress is most amusing. Their heads are shaved until they glisten, yet always one small patch of hair remains; and where it remains is left to the whim of the first barber who shaves the child's head.

He may cut away all but a small bit over the right

ear. He may shave all save a topknot, then decide to cut out the center of that. He may leave a ledge of hair flopping over the forehead. The funniest of all are the tiny queues growing at the base of the skull, exactly in the center. A baby friend of mine who plays in the hutung outside my home has such a queue. Each time I see him plodding along behind the other children my fingers itch to catch hold and show him how the turkey got over the log.

• • •

Chinese women rouge with a subtle grace that is art itself. There is no evidence of the heavy daubs affected by Westerners. Instead, the daughters of Cathay add a faint coloring; upon their amber cheeks it resembles the shy tinting of the early dawn.

Babies are not so careful. They appear with red rings painted on their cheeks, with a daub on the tip of the nose, another between the eyes and a third on the forehead. It sounds rather barbaric, but it fits in perfectly with the brilliant hair wrappings and the bright-colored clothing.

I thought, perhaps, the painting of children's faces might have some significance; so I asked Wu, my rickshaw boy. He assured me it was done solely for the purpose of adornment.

"Make pretty," as he expressed it.

• • •

I don't know when I shall leave Peiping. I love this city as I've never loved another except Paris and Vienna. I don't want to go away. It is too delightful here. All I do is let the nights follow the days and as they go by I sing our old favorite. Remember—

Heh nonny no!
Men are fools that wish to die!
Is't not fine to dance and sing
When the bells of death do ring?
Is't not fine to swim in wine,
And turn upon the toe
And sing hey nonny no,
When the winds blow and the seas flow?
Heh nonny no!

. . .

By the way, there's a sign over a Chinese tourist bureau in Peiping which reads: "Let us take care of your luggage. We send it in all directions."

XXVIII

I FIRST saw him one September morning as slowly he dragged his little cart through the dust of Chi'i-Hua Men Street, in Peiping. I stepped from beneath the red lacquer gate, adorned with golden ornaments, which served as entrance to the home where I had been calling.

"Rickshaw," I said, and beckoned to him.

He trotted forward and lowered the shafts of his little carriage. I prepared for the almost inevitable gesticulation by which one gives instructions to those strange fellows, the rickshaw boys of the Orient. As I was trying to determine what movements of my hands and expressions of my face would best inform him of my desire to be carried from Chi'i-Hua Men Street to the Hotel de Pekin, he smiled at me.

"Yes, master," he said.

"So! You talkee English, yes?"

"Can do, master."

I instructed him to take me to the hotel.

"Can do, master," he said.

He assisted me into the rickshaw. He wrapped a blanket about my ankles and feet. Then he stepped between the shafts and raised them. Slowly for three steps he moved forward. The cart gathered momentum and he began to trot.

Now a rickshaw is merely a one-man carriage—one man in two meanings, for one man rides in it and one man pulls it. The seat, usually wide enough for only a single passenger, is comfortably upholstered. There are arm rests and a support for the back. The bed of the cart extends three feet forward; even a tall man may comfortably extend his legs. The wheels are from three to five feet in diameter. From this height passengers sometimes are catapulted, for no self-respecting rickshaw boy will allow another to pass him. In the frequent races there are spills that may result in cut skin or broken bone.

The unique feature of the carriage is that affixed to the base of the bed are two shafts. Between them the rickshaw boy steps, picks up one in each hand and trots away—a human horse.

I looked down at the fellow who jogged along before me. His magnificent shoulders were twisted slightly and his head was tilted to one side. After the custom of more rakish rickshaw boys, his head had been shaved. The perspiration momentarily glistened, then slid downward. As he ran he mopped his head and neck with a dirty rag. For a mile his dog-trot was unbroken. He whirled about corners, calling his warning: "'Shaw! 'Shaw!" he called. Any slow-moving pedestrian who halted his speed was cursed with a gush of gutter Chinese.

Across Hata Men Street he cantered. Nor did he halt his stride as he swore at a man who sprinkled the street by flinging water from a bamboo dipper, and who

WU THE INCOMPARABLE

carelessly flung some of it on the rickshaw. Into Chang An Street he trotted, somewhat easing his pace when the wheels of his rickshaw touched the asphalt pavement of the modern highway.

As he turned into the path leading to the hotel he quickened his gait, and struck the sharp rise with such a jolt that I was forced to grasp the arm rests. For four steps he charged upward, then bent double over the forward crosspiece between the shafts. The muscles of his naked back slid about like excited snakes. At the top of the incline he straightened and ran easily between the double line of rickshaw coolies.

"Wu," they called. "Wu . . . Wu."

They shouted various pleasantries, grinning at the boy who pulled me. He disdained their greetings and made straight for the entrance of the hotel. There he halted himself, rearing back between the poles he held in either hand. When he came to a stop he lowered the shafts. Immediately they were released he leaped to my side, removed the blanket from my feet and ankles and held up his hand to assist me in descending. Forgetting, I made the usual gestures. I pointed to the exact spot where he stood, I touched his breast and then touched my own.

"Master make talkee me wait. Me savee, master."

Twenty minutes later I came out of the hotel. The boy was crouched, sitting peacefully upon his heels. In his left hand he held a bowl. In his right were the chopsticks with which he fished up tidbits of sheep intestines. As I stepped into the open he made four or

five deft plunges with the sticks. Each ascent brought forth a delicacy. He crammed it all into his mouth, put the bowl aside, picked up the shafts and hurried forward.

"Jade Street—you savee?" I asked.

He nodded, his mouth being too full to permit speech. I stepped in and was carried away. Through the Legation Quarter we passed, across the shadow cast by the Fox Tower and so into Chien Men Street, the most picturesque thoroughfare in all the world.

"'Shaw! 'Shaw!" he called, twisting his way through the motley crowd that cluttered the road.

A policeman held up his stumpy baton. My boy ignored such officiousness. The policeman called his curses. The rickshaw boy increased the compliments and went on his way, mumbling.

At the mouth of the narrow, dingy passage, which is the center of Peiping jade traffic, the fellow stopped his carriage.

"Jade Street, master," he said.

As I was climbing out, the cry went up. "Wygolin! Wygolin!" The shout that a European man had arrived caused a quick swarming of beggars. The blind and the halt and the maimed flocked to the prospective feast. There was an old man with his nose eaten away. There was a boy with no arms. A mother, covered with sores, pushed almost into my face a baby that was a sore.

"Go away," I said. "Go away."

So soon as I spoke, my rickshaw boy dropped the

shafts of his cart. With hands and feet he drove the beggars off. But as I walked away they followed me, coming closer and closer. Again he kicked and slapped them aside.

"Wait, master," he said.

At the entrance of a shop sat an old man. My boy spoke with him. Then he came to me.

"My friend," he said, pointing to the old man. "He watch rickshaw. Me go with master." He hesitated. Seemed embarrassed. He touched his chest. "Me—Wu," he announced.

"Your name's Wu?"

"Yes, master—Wu."

For an hour we wandered through the tiny stalls where jade is sold. Each of the shopkeepers saluted Wu and bowed to me. They brought forth trays of jade and offered it. Wu waved it aside.

"No good, master. No can do."

Other trays would be proffered and rejected. At last, caskets containing finest jade would be brought from inner safes. Wu would peer at all of it. After a time he would select the most exquisite jewel-jade, would hold it to the light and discourse upon the delicacy of the shading. For half a dozen words he would talk in Pidgin-English, only to break into a rush of Chinese and end in a superb grin.

In one shop I became enamored of a pair of ear pendants. The original price asked was one hundred dollars. I offered fifteen dollars. The argument was longer than usual. Finally I dispatched Wu to fetch

his rickshaw. While he was away the dealer and I settled upon thirty-five dollars and I paid it. When Wu arrived I stepped into the cart.

"Did buy, master?" he asked.

"Did buy, Wu," and I showed the pendants.

"What master pay?"

I told him. He thought for a moment, then lowered the shafts and went into the store. Soon a most frightful racket came from within. After it had risen to a terrific height it suddenly ended. Wu came out and handed me the equivalent of twenty-eight cents.

"He have charge too much, master. Now you pay right."

Calmly he stepped between the shafts and a moment later we were jogging along Jade Street. From one of the small shops a man hurried. He signed to us to come in. Wu ignored him. He caught the shaft. Wu tried to brush him aside. He caught the arm of my coat. Wu instantly stopped, lowered the shafts, boxed the man's ears, picked up the shafts and trotted off, calling over his shoulder: "He fool. No can touch master."

On the way home I repeatedly told myself this Wu was a man among men. I wondered if any Occidental could ever peer behind that blank mask he wore. I longed to know his intimate ways, his habits, his thoughts. At the entrance of the hotel I handed him twenty-five cents—good pay for two hours' work.

"Can do, master," he said.

I turned and went inside. Just before the door

closed I looked back. Wu was walking away; one hand upon a shaft of his rickshaw and the other wiping his glistening head.

In the afternoon I was to go out for tea. I went downstairs and told the doorman to call me a rickshaw.

"Rickshaw wait," he said.

"What rickshaw?"

"Wu wait."

At the entrance of the hotel Wu greeted me. Courteously he smiled and bowed. I thanked him for attending me. His casual gesture nobly brushed aside my sense of obligation. At the entrance of the home where I was calling for the afternoon, Wu lowered his rickshaw.

"How long, master?" he asked.

"Hour and a half—two hours."

"Can do, master. Me have tea here." He pointed to a portable tea room, a coolie squatting beside a shoulder-pole, the opposite ends of which held kettles filled with boiling water and strong tea. Wu bowed to me. He and I separated to go to our afternoon refreshment.

Later, while on the way home, I asked if he would have another rickshaw at the hotel at eight o'clock. I explained we were to call for a lady whom I was accompanying to the theatre. The inevitable, "Can do," was the answer.

But at seven o'clock came a telephone message that the lady's father suddenly had become ill. She would be unable to leave her home. I was greatly disap-

pointed, because Mei Lan Fang, the most famous of all Chinese actors, was producing his most celebrated play. I debated forgoing the pleasure of the evening, then decided to visit the playhouse alone. At eight o'clock Wu's arrival was announced. When I stepped from the entrance he bowed to me.

"Chung," he said, indicating a second rickshaw boy. "My friend," he added. Once the introduction was completed, Wu informed me, "Chung no talkee English. Chung no study."

I stepped into the rickshaw and said I wished to go to the theatre.

"But where missee live?" Wu demanded.

"Missee no can do," I said. "Missee father sick."

Wu stopped. He informed Chung of the change in plans. Out of his own pocket he paid his friend, silencing my protests by assuring me I could settle with him later. Chung went away alone. Wu and I started into the Legation Quarter.

After a time the boy said: "Missee no can do?"

"No," I answered.

"Missee have got ticket?"

"No. I have missee's ticket."

Another period of silence. At a crossroad Wu stopped for a flock of sheep to amble before him. Once he started again, he said: "What master do with ticket?"

"Nothing," I replied. "There's nothing I can do with it."

Wu did not answer, merely jogged along. Through

the Legation Quarter he went, beside the Fox Tower, dark and reverberating its ghostly echoes, and into Chien Men Street.

"Mei Lan Fang make play to-night, master?"

"Yes, Wu."

"Mei Lan Fang, he best actor. He very best actor."

Suddenly I understood. "I say, Wu," I called, "how would you like to have this other ticket? Would you like to come to the theatre with me?"

"Can do, master," and his trot became an absolute gallop.

At the entrance of the theatre I motioned Wu to come in with me. He shook his head. I insisted. He refused. Three times he said he couldn't come immediately. Finally I gave him the ticket, rather disappointed. I believed he wanted to sell it. I went in and sat down.

Half an hour after the play began, in walked a most distinguished-looking young Chinese gentleman. His topcoat was of black and was padded quite in the mode. His underjacket was of black silk and his trousers were of the same material. His shoes were new and from them white socks rose to exactly the proper height. The tiny round hat had a scarlet button atop it. The gentleman came toward me. He doffed his hat. Surely I had seen that glistening head before. Wu bowed.

"Can do, master," he said and took his seat beside me.

During the performance Wu explained the meaning of the songs. He managed to translate enough of the speeches for me to understand their general import. He became vastly excited when Mei Lan Fang, far under the sea, fought his celebrated duel with the oyster—undoubtedly the most famous spectacle of the modern Chinese stage.

Wu smoked my cigarettes and offered me his. He drank tea with me—taking care to retrieve one-eighth of an American penny that the tea boy was trying to steal. He insisted upon my drinking tea with him. During a lull in the performance he suggested we retire to a wine house.

In the refreshment parlor Wu called for a bottle of the landlord's best. I made a pretense of sipping my glass. Wu downed the quart. In order to give reason for such copious drinking he ate three bowls of sheep intestines. He smacked his lips and spat with gusto.

About midnight, when the performance ended, Wu and I walked toward the entrance. I was vastly embarrassed with the thought that such a person, my guest, a gentleman of twenty-nine years, was to drag me some two miles in a handcart. I suggested that Wu go directly home and that I would take another rickshaw.

"Have done, master."

I didn't exactly understand what that meant, but I asked no further questions. Once outside, Wu held up his hand and two runners came forward. Wu as-

sisted me into one rickshaw. He stepped into the other. Side by side we rode back into Chien Men Street. Wu poured out the story of the play to the boys pulling us, though he did not forget to turn frequently and address a polite remark to his host. At the intersection of Chien Men Street and Lantern Street, Wu halted the two runners.

"I go back, master," he said. "What time morning?"

I overcame my hesitancy and told him the hour I desired to go out.

"Can do," he answered, and raised his hat, waiting for me to be hauled away.

For six weeks Wu pulled my rickshaw over the streets and byways of Peiping. One morning he carried me to a tailor and decided for me the best cloth to put in a topcoat. That noon he made all arrangements and in the afternoon hauled me five miles beyond the city walls that I might visit a Chinese jail. In the evening he waited outside the club while I played bridge until well after midnight. And the next morning at eight o'clock he stormed over the hotel attendants to get into my bedroom and drag me out that I might witness an especially elaborate funeral.

When I went shopping, Wu entered each place. As I looked at silks, jade, embroidery or pottery he sat at a table and drank tea—tea he considered one of his prerogatives. Everywhere we went he demanded tea. Invariably the shopkeeper produced a kettle. As Wu sucked up great quantities of the liquid he made noises

like the lapping of small waves against the side of a ship.

While I haggled with the shopkeeper Wu never looked at me. But once I had struck a price Wu considered favorable to me, he would lift his hat and put it back on his head. At that signal I always bought.

One evening I told Wu we should have to be up early the next morning. A lady who had been hospitable to me in Peiping was leaving for Shanghai. We were to see her off at the station.

"Can do," Wu answered.

The next morning he appeared holding two bouquets of rather bedraggled flowers. After he had tucked me into the rickshaw, he placed the flowers on my lap. I, of course, asked no questions. At the station Wu handed me the larger bouquet. "Master give missee," he said. He touched the other bouquet. "Wu give missee."

One morning Wu hauled me a total distance of ten miles. In the afternoon he rushed into my room with the information that many dead and dying men were at the railway station. Would master like to look see?

I have never seen him run so fast. He bellowed his warning: "'Shaw! 'Shaw!" he roared, and every one stood aside. In order to save a few seconds he cut across the field of the Polo Club. He crashed around corners so sharply that again and again I thought I should be thrown out. At the railway sta-

tion he dropped the shafts of his cart, ordered another rickshaw boy to stand guard and led me inside.

There upon the platform lay two score wounded and dead soldiers. Wu walked among them, talking to this man, chatting with that one, at ease and friendly with all.

As we left I asked Wu, the rickshaw boy, who day after day ran some fifteen miles before me, if he would like to be a soldier. He shook his head and grinned.

"No can do, master. Have got flat feet."

I paid Wu fifty cents a day. With his regular salary I frequently gave him tips, particularly if I had kept him late at night. Besides this legitimate income he received from shopkeepers 10 per cent of what I spent in shops. The topcoat for which I paid forty dollars brought Wu four dollars—a week's salary. My purchases of jade, silks and embroideries caused his graft income far to exceed his pay. But there is no arguing against the system. In the Orient it always has been.

Out of his income Wu gave his mother $1.50 each week. He told me she lived comfortably on such an allowance. Besides this drain upon his finances Wu was educating a younger brother. He paid one dollar a quarter for the lad's schooling. One day Wu, with greatest pride, announced he had just paid off the debt on his brother's books for the year.

"How much did they cost?" I asked.

"Two dollars," he told me.

I inquired why he should spend so much money on educating his brother. "Why," I demanded, "do you

put money in your brother's head? Why do you want him to be educated?"

"He educated," Wu answered, "he then no have pull rickshaw."

After several very broad hints on my part, Wu finally invited me to visit his quarters. We passed through streets of solid blackness. We turned and turned again and once we crossed a bridge. At the end of a lane Wu stopped with his hand upon a door.

"Where rickshaw boy live," he said.

He pushed open the door and we entered. Inside was an open courtyard. At one corner a feeble light struggled ineffectually against the darkness. Behind the lamp a man bent over a counter where cheap cigarettes and vinegary wine awaited buyers. Beyond was a shed with rickshaws standing row by row.

Wu led me to the left, into a passage where I had to bow my head as I walked. After an abrupt turn we came to a low platform built against one side of a long room. The platform was six feet wide and my eyes followed until they lost it in the darkness. At intervals I saw dim lumps, vaguely outlined.

"Rickshaw boy sleep," Wu said. "Can sleep here eight cents each night. Quilt two cents more each night."

We retraced the passage and Wu led me around a bend. For the first time I heard men talking. We turned another corner and before us was a large room. In it burned six kerosene lamps. Grouped around the lamps were scores of rickshaw boys. All were gam-

bling. Some played Mah Jongg, some played checkers, some played Chinese card games. In the center of the room ten men played stud poker. The air was heavy and the stench of the kerosene mingled with the strong odor of human bodies.

As I entered I heard them murmur: "Wygolin . . . Wygolin." Every one smiled and bowed and made jokes with Wu. Those who knew English spoke their few words and seemed very pleased with themselves.

One man at the poker game called out. Wu shook his head. The man turned to me and pointed to the bare boards upon which they played.

"I say, Wu, does he mean I can get in the game?"

"Can do, master."

Immediately I signified my desire to play. They made an opening and dealt me a hand. I was careful to watch the stakes and not to play above them, though I did run one pot to ninety cents and lost it when a young Chinaman uncovered the third knave to beat my three eights.

When I left, every one bowed and smiled and those who could speak English asked me to come back again. Wu explained that many rickshaw boys knew a little English; they learn it from tourists. He remarked casually that he knew more than the others. He had studied with an old man who spoke good English. Besides, he had an English book.

He told me many interesting facts about the rickshaw boys. He told me that one of them had just

killed his sweetheart. He told me that another had been an imperial eunuch. He told me that the young Chinaman who won from me at poker had not fully recovered from an attack of smallpox.

After Wu had served me for a month I left him and went on an excursion to the Great Wall. There I was taken ill and brought back into Peiping. How Wu found out, I shall never know, but the morning after I returned he came into my room. The nurses had told him he couldn't. They said I was not to receive visitors. Wu's only English answer was, "Can do." His Chinese was overwhelming. He came in and stood beside my bed.

When finally he realized I had seen and had recognized him, he bowed, his hands in sorrow thrust far up opposite sleeves.

"Master," he said, softly, "can do, master?"

"Can do, Wu," I answered.

He went away. An hour later he came back. He carried pots of drooping flowers, vases of faded flowers. He placed them about my room. Then he went outside and crouched at my door. At the end of the visitors' hour they came and told him he would have to leave.

"No can do," he answered.

They insisted.

"Master here," he said. "Wu here."

The orderly went away and the nurse came. She told Wu he would have to go away.

"Master here," he said. "Wu here."

The nurse went away and the interne came. Then the doctor. Then they all came.

"Master here," he repeated. "Wu here."

He never left me.

At mealtimes he ate his bowl of rice outside my door. At night he slept on a balcony outside my window. It seemed as if I never turned over once, never moaned once, but Wu appeared at the side of my bed.

"Can do, master?" he would ask.

Then came the day before I was to be discharged from the hospital. The doctor said I could leave the next afternoon at two o'clock. He said a taxi would be ordered for me.

The remainder of that day Wu went about my room. He arranged the flowers. He watched me read. He studied my favorite game of solitaire and, for the hundredth time, shook his head. As night came on he stood at the window and looked out.

"Why are you so quiet, Wu?" I asked. "You've told me nothing all day."

Wu did not turn around: "To-morrow," he said, "master go home."

"Yes," I answered.

"Master go home in taxi. Wu's rickshaw no can do."

I swallowed twice and looked away. After a time I could speak. "Can do, Wu," I said. "Can do."

"Thanks, master."

Wu left me to go out in the hallway and squat there.

On the morning I left Peiping Wu was at my house at daybreak. He packed my luggage into one rickshaw. He packed me into another. All the way to the station he trotted slowly and said nothing. Beside the train he handed me the tickets he had bought for me. He showed me the seat where a friend of his had sat since dawn, to hold it for me.

"Master have say he want Chinese doll. Wu have got."

From up the fold of his sleeve he drew a superb doll. Of satin, it was, and the dress was subtly embroidered. Before I could speak, Wu bowed again.

"Will master take this—" From beneath his jacket he drew a Chinese fan of silk, painted exquisitely. "Will master take this to his parents from Wu?"

And then, without waiting, he turned and walked away. I hurried after him.

"Wu," I called, "Wu, come back, old fellow. Don't leave me like this. Wu . . . Wu . . . Come here, I tell you. Can do, Wu." For a moment I thought he hesitated, but I must have been mistaken, for even my quick pace failed to gain on him. "Wu, I—"

The whistle of the train blew. I stopped. It blew again. I saw the scarlet button atop his little black hat. I saw it bob up and down. Then he must have turned a corner, for I saw it no more.

XXIX

DEAR Gilbert W. Mead: I'm writing this on the deck of a bateau smaller than the celebrated cockleshell. In fact, its tonnage is notably below that of the Beautiful Pea-green Boat.

I boarded her yesterday at Weihaiwei. For about thirty minutes all was serene, then we rounded Shantung promontory and pitched out into the Yellow Sea. From that instant it has been terrific. All night I lay on my bunk muttering prayers to Dolores, Our Lady of Pain. This morning I watched Aurora fling her fair-colored quilt through the eastern sky and a little later I essayed some breakfast. I manipulated a bit of cereal and a taste of toast, but the second egg utterly defeated me and I sought the deck. A moment later the captain saw me, and, after the manner of Grangousier, remarked: *"Que grand tu as et souple le gousier!"*

But the sea has become somewhat quiet and I may best dull my misery by writing you a letter I've already been too long postponing. Again and again since being in China I've wished you might go to the theatre with me. I've so often thought how admirably you could use the Chinese drama in your History of the Drama there at Birmingham-Southern College.

A visit to a Chinese theatre is probably the most

bewildering experience a Westerner can enjoy in a land where to him all is topsy-turvy and turned backwards, yet to a student of theatricals the varied Chinese productions indicate stage history from the days of Sophocles and Euripides, through the medieval plays, to Marlowe and Shakespeare and on to Shaw.

Performances in a Chinese theatre begin early in the afternoon and last until after midnight. Some last two or three days. A gentleman wanders in, looks at a dozen scenes or more, goes home for dinner, then comes back and sees the remainder of the play. Since there is no plot, merely color and singing and dancing, there is no worry about continuity.

The orchestra in all Chinese playhouses is a maddening nuisance. Not long ago I was in a theatre where the din was supplied by the following instruments: a small and a large gong, two pairs of cymbals, a flute, a clarinet, a Chinese fiddle and a drum like a tom-tom. Furthermore, the leader of the orchestra beat a wooden hammer upon a wooden mortar and set the tempo by rattling three pieces of hollow wood.

These instruments were banged, beaten, blown, sawed and hammered by violent and lusty men. Such bedlam never stops. There may be a momentary lull while some important actor speaks an important speech or sings a dirge which passes as a song, but even then there's never a complete cessation. And the instant the actor concludes, the larger gongs and cymbals come back into action with such a bombilation as no Occidental can imagine.

CHINESE THEATRE

Upper left: love-making on the Chinese stage. Upper right: Mei Lan-Fang, the greatest of all Chinese actors. In the winter of 1930 he and his company visited New York. His interpretation of female rôles drew praise from even the most blasé critics. Lower left: Mei Lan-Fang in one of his favorite parts. Lower right: China's dramatic conception of a Chinese general.

Since most of the speeches and songs of the actors are never heard, and since the orchestra constantly raises such a hubbub, there is small wonder that the audience makes no pretense of silence. Men chat back and forth with each other. Pillow boys wander about the place and shout the advantage of renting a cushion for the evening. Venders of hot towels, used for cooling the face, call their offerings, and throw them with a deftness mindful of peanut boys flinging their wares at baseball parks. Tea merchants clatter kettles and cups while serving the drink—the gentleman sitting next to you almost drowns the orchestra in his boisterous intake of the beverage. When the show is nearly half over, the program sellers arrive. They go through the audience and quarrel with those who refuse to give a few coppers for one of the red papers they wave above their heads. And all the time, over and above all, like artillery, or great discordant bells, or the Anvil Chorus played on rusty iron, the orchestra bangs through its endless musical supplement to the play.

The scenery of a Chinese theatre is very simple. There is no forward curtain and almost never a set. The dazzling back-drop serves equally well for a battlefield, a monk's cell, or a damsel's boudoir.

The stage properties exist entirely within the mind of the audience. One night I saw a play in which an actor was supposed to climb a mountain. He walked half across the stage. A chair was placed in his path.

He stepped over the chair, very, very slowly. He had climbed the mountain.

But the bareness of the boards and the monotony of the stage are forgotten in the gorgeous and elaborate costumes of the actors. Brilliant colors clash and blend. Horrible masks are worn, else the face is streaked and daubed with paint. Long pheasant feathers droop from the backs of dancers. A general is recognized by half a dozen flags flying from his shoulders. Beards of all descriptions sweep from the chin to the waist. In such accouterments the actors strike their poses and whirl and spin through their contortions. Sometimes their art, to Western eyes, seems rather humorous.

There are two entrances or exits, both at the rear of the stage. Before them hang simple cloth curtains. When an actor has finished his turn, he may exit, or he may take a chair at the side and, in full view of the audience, await his next entrance. When that time approaches, he goes out, then comes in again.

Friends of the actors sit on the stage. The orchestra, too, is there. And some of the gallants of the town. Likewise the servants and sometimes the children of the players. Servants keep pots of tea constantly boiling on small stoves at one side of the stage. During the play—but that reminds me—

The Chinese have a distinct facility in spitting. They spit with audibility, with frequency, and with an indiscrimination of direction. For no reason that a foreigner can understand, the native Chinese spits

upon every provocation and upon no provocation whatever. Furthermore he spits from, at, and to every angle. *Sauve qui peut!*

In the best modern Chinese theatres, large and brilliantly polished cuspidors are placed at convenient intervals upon the stage. No up-to-date Chinese stage would be complete without them. In fact, the prosperity of the producer is partly judged by the size and gleam of the cuspidors he has provided for the actors.

But in the old style theatre the ways of the fathers are still good enough. There are no cuspidors and the actor makes no attempt to locate a receptacle. Neither does he discriminate against matting or floor. Neither does he strive in any manner to hide his activity from the audience. He simply spits.

After a song or a long speech the actor is presented with a cup of tea by his servant. The actor sweeps aside his false beard, flings back his head, flings down his tea, then spits in series. After smearing the back of his hand across his lips, he drops his whiskers, smacks his lips, once more strikes his pose and the play goes on right merrily.

* * *

There is a condition existing in China difficult for one outside the country to understand. Probably never before in any civilized land has there been such merciless brigandage.

The smarter and more daring bandits, those who work in cities, confine their activities to kidnaping.

There is seldom an issue of the newspaper but the kidnaping of some well-known man is reported, though only a small percentage of these crimes is made public. The family, as a rule, fear to talk. Talking usually brings death to the absent one and further terrorizing to those who have gone to the police.

Yet absolute silence and obedience aren't always successful. Recently a wealthy man of Peiping was taken from in front of his home. He was held for a ransom of half a million dollars. It was paid. A similar sum was demanded. It was paid. Then a million dollars was called for, and paid. This continued until the family had sold every belonging. On the day the last payment was made, the man's decomposed body was left on his doorstep.

The brigands in the countryside are so numerous and so bold that no one, not even a European, dares venture beyond the walls of Peiping after dark. The gates of the town, ponderous and bradded with iron, are closed each night at eight o'clock and are not opened until dawn. The great city fears the robbers of the country.

The morning I left Weihaiwei I read that one band had raided a town and destroyed property valued at five million dollars. Several hundred men, women and children were killed. After sacking the place, the freebooters carried off three hundred prominent men. They were held for ransom.

This condition cannot easily be altered. Organized

soldiers might be sent against the brigands, but that would mean more guerilla warfare. Then, too, the troops of the government are not above practising a little pillaging on their own.

A young farmer told me of a friend who lived near him. The friend was kidnaped by a brigand and his band. The ransom was set at one thousand dollars. The family sold everything, but could raise only seven hundred and fifty dollars. The chief said that was all right. He announced he would send back seven hundred and fifty dollars' worth. He returned the man to his home after having cut off his right arm.

Soon after the amputation had been performed, an emissary arrived with another fifty dollars the family had raised. The chief expressed his regrets that it had not come sooner. Had it done so he would have cut off the left arm, instead of the right.

* * *

A mandarin was hardly the romantic and lordly person usually imagined by Westerners. He was merely an officer of government, a civil or military official.

The word mandarin comes from the Portuguese *mandar,* meaning "to command." In China the term mandarin applied to those officials eligible to wear small round buttons on top of their circular hats. There were nine ranks of mandarins, each designated by a distinctive button. Rank was further indicated

by insignia embroidered on the robe and by the material of the girdle clasp.

A second rank mandarin of the army or navy wore the lion of India on his robe and a girdle clasp of gold set with rubies. A mandarin of the ninth class in the civil service displayed a long-tailed jay on his robe and a girdle clasp of buffalo horn.

But all this has been swept away by the new government. Democracy has kicked it aside. There are no mandarins. Every coolie or street peddler wears a button on top of his circular hat—proof positive that he's as good a man as any other.

* * *

Women's milk in China is considered especially beneficial to aged persons. It is very expensive, a teacup of it selling for one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars.

* * *

Since being in China I've asked scores of Chinese: "What do you think of Americans?"

And the Chinaman, if he's honest, usually admits he holds the same feeling for foreigners that foreigners hold for him. Nationally we all are lunatics in our patriotic assumption that we are better than other people. The Frenchman considers himself above the Italian, the Italian believes he's better than the German, the German is certain he's superior to the Englishman, and the Englishman is positive—he doesn't hesitate to tell you so—that he's the cream of

the world. And all the time we in the United States sit off and chortle, because we know we're the best in this best of all possible worlds.

Strangely enough, the Chinaman—that is, the yellow man, the owner of alley laundries, the keeper of tawdry chop-suey joints—entertains the same delusion. In his breast burns the insistent belief that the Chinese are God's chosen people. From the centuries of his civilization he smiles at upstart nations who speak of time only since the coming of Christ.

The Chinaman admits he wishes he had American plumbing, American machinery, English warships, German chemistry—all the conveniences of the West; but his serene philosophy, his peace in turmoil, his aloofness from the petty disturbances of war and typhoon and tornado, his dignified acceptance of death and of the other mysteries of the universe, afford him a superiority to be challenged by no mechanical device.

After the Chinaman definitely places himself on the pinnacle, he goes to the depths and digs the deepest hole. There he puts the Japanese. The two nations hate, loathe and fear each other.

The Chinaman considers the Britisher the most reliable, the most steady, and, probably, the most valuable of his national friends.

The American he regards with amused tolerance, as an elderly person looks upon a lovable, talkative and impetuous young man who lacks experience.

Some of the most exquisite Chinese embroidery is done by filthy old women who sit at the side of the street. Day after day they sit there and embroider rich and subtle designs.

It is because some of these women suffer from smallpox, leprosy and other diseases that embroidered goods from China are required to be disinfected before being passed into the United States.

Incidentally, the women always are ready to stop their routine work and pick up a few coppers by patching the garments of coolies. In Chefoo one morning I saw an old woman sewing a rent in the seat of the trousers of a man who crouched forward before her.

* * *

The fighting of crickets is one of the most exciting sports of the Chinese.

The Celestial makes a pet of the common cricket, housing him in a small earthen jar the size of your fist. There the cricket lives and enjoys his daily meal of a grain of cooked rice. During the winter the owner of a valuable fighting cricket keeps the jar forever next his skin, not removing it even during the hours of sleep. The heat of the man's body warms the cricket and enables him to live through the trying months of January, February and March.

A scheduled cricket fight in China sometimes assumes the importance of a championship prize fight in America. The contestants are known by name and huge sums are wagered upon the outcome.

The fighting takes place in a round bowl about eight inches in diameter and six inches in depth. The bottom is covered with wet sand. This arena is placed upon a table and two judges take their places at opposite sides.

Male crickets are the fighters. For weeks before a match they are denied their mates. Then immediately prior to engaging in the death struggle, for all fights are to the death, each contestant is placed in a small bowl with his mate. The owner permits the cricket to remain with his mate for only an instant. He watches carefully, then suddenly snatches up the gladiator and tosses him into the arena.

The fighter instantly begins to prance. He raises himself high. He flexes his leg. Abruptly, he begins to sing, the "singing" being caused by the friction of the forewings. The other cricket answers. They defy each other. They hail those who are to behold the death struggle, as if to cry: *"Morituri te salutamus."*

Each judge holds a slender tube to which are fastened hairs from a horse's tail. These hairs are drawn over the cricket's body exactly at its base. They still further excite him.

The fighters circle about the bowl, working in toward each other, drawing back, darting forward, whirling to meet the attack, and then, like two brown streaks, they rush together, their jaws gaping.

Their mouths lock and they reel about the arena,

struggling and straining. They grip, they sway, they break, they clench again.

After the fight has gone on for two minutes, three minutes, four minutes, one cricket tires. His enemy presses harder. Until drawing back quickly he flashes forward, sidesteps, clamps his jaws on a leg no larger than a straw. There is a scarcely audible "click," as the bone is mangled. And the victor draws back with the severed limb in his jaw.

The vanquished attempts to crawl away, dragging his stump beside him. But his conqueror spits out the torn leg. He darts around and bites off the other leg. He spits it out. He climbs on the back of the wounded cricket and bites his neck in half. He then raises himself high and sings in the full glory of his triumph.

One night in Tientsin I saw a fight between "The Tiger" and "He-Who-Fears-Neither-Foe-Nor-Death." There was known to be one hundred and twelve thousand dollars bet on the match.

The two celebrated crickets, both victors in scores of fights, charged at each other the instant they were dropped into the arena. There was no need for judges to excite them. They darted forward as if knowing they were engaged in the battle of the century.

My host was half owner of The Tiger. He advised me to bet as much as I liked. I bet all I could. I won the money, but somehow I haven't enjoyed spending it. I don't know, it's rather silly, I suppose, but I shall never forget the feeling that gripped my

heart when, after eight minutes of fighting, The Tiger finally drove his jaws into the brittle leg of the weary He-Who-Fears-Neither-Foe-Nor-Death and I heard the faint "click" of those sporting little bones.

XXX

CHINKEE, Chinkee, Chinaman"—and then the derisive declaration about a favorite dish of the Chinese.

It is a taunt familiar to every American boy.

And while it is true that some Chinamen eat rats and mice, and dote on the slick young fellows captured and prepared immediately after birth, it is not correct to suppose that rodents are universally popular with the Chinese.

The chief food of China is rice. It is served with each meal and for the poorer classes sometimes constitutes the entire menu, though even the pauper usually obtains a bit of fish or meat or vegetable to go with it.

Pork is the favorite meat in the south of China. In the north, pork and mutton are equally popular.

Birds'-nest soup is probably the most celebrated Chinese delicacy. Unfailingly it excites the Oriental palate. It is served first at all grand dinners. It tunes the gourmand for the feast.

It is white in coloring, is soft and slips off the edge of the spoon. In appearance the nearest Occidental counterpart is clabbered milk, junket. The taste is somewhat like the smell of a steam laundry. The Chinese admit that a fondness for birds'-nest soup is an acquired one.

Particularly so, says the Westerner, after the source of the soup is learned; for the nest is made of a gummy substance which the bird secretes and passes out through his bill. Darwin declares that "the Chinese eat soup made of dried saliva."

The nests of swallows are built in caves along the seacoast. Partly because of danger attendant upon gathering the nests, they sell for high prices: from five to thirty dollars a pound. The nests average three-quarters of a pound in weight.

Few cooks in private homes can prepare the dish. It is one of the most difficult on the Chinese menu. This is the recipe copied from a native cookbook: "Take clean white birds' nests, and soak thoroughly. Pick out all feathers. Boil in soup or water until tender, add sugar candy and then eat. This is a most clear and pure article, and thick or oily substances should not be added. It should be boiled for a long time, for, if not boiled until tender, it will cause diarrhœa."

In *The Son of the Grand Eunuch,* that thoroughly wicked and thoroughly enjoyable book, the author, when telling of feasts, stresses the Chinese fondness for preserved eggs.

There are two types, the pickled and the flour, both made from duck eggs. The person preparing the flour egg first mixes lime and flour. Then the egg is coated in the mixture, wrapped in a corn husk and buried. It should remain undisturbed for a period varying from three to four weeks. At the expiration

of that time it is dug up and put aside to be eaten later.

"It's best eaten when fresh," an old Chinese gentleman told me, "say in about six months."

Pickled eggs are prepared by putting them in a jar filled with salt. There they stay for a month or more. When taken out they are put in a cool dry place. And they are good from now on, world without end. The connoisseur prefers them reasonably high, say a hundred years or so. Just before being eaten the pickled egg is boiled.

Both the pickled and the flour egg are offered for sale by the street merchant. At fairs and other public gatherings the demand for them is brisk. In taste they are very much like a boiled chicken egg, except that there is an overtone suggestive of vinegar and stale mustard.

One of the most enjoyable dishes at a Chinese feast is sharks' fins. It is a food entirely palatable on first acquaintance. One can easily understand the loud lip-smacking of the natives when this course is served. The fins are prepared by being boiled and scraped six or seven times. In the final preparation they are stewed in a highly flavored soup. This stewing imparts the desired taste to the meat.

Dried watermelon seeds frequently are passed at a Chinese meal. They are handed around as nuts are served by Westerners. The native places the seed between his teeth, cracks it, ejects the shell and eats the kernel. The taste is pleasant enough, but to inex-

perienced teeth the job of extraction is conspicuously difficult.

Cats are eaten by some classes in China and are considered especially enjoyable. Butcher shops dangle cats from hooks just as they do sheep or hogs.

Dogs are served, mainly because their flesh is supposed to be invigorating. A black dog can impart wondrous strength. His flesh can even be depended upon as an aphrodisiac. One seldom sees a black dog in China.

Because they benefit the health and assure good luck, snakes are eaten.

The blood of ducks, pigs and sheep is sold for food. Whatever blood is not eaten goes into the making of varnish.

Small greenish worms collected in the rice fields are relished. Silkworm grubs are considered palatable. So are chicken intestines.

Ask the Chinaman the number of meals he eats each day and he will say he eats but two: breakfast and dinner. And yet from his rising to his sleeping he is taking a snack here or munching a morsel there. He is encouraged in this petty gourmandizing by the innumerable restaurants in every Chinese city.

The lowest type of restaurant is the portable. The man who owns one carries a pole over his shoulder, a container swung on each end of it. In one container is the food served cold. In the bottom of the other is a charcoal fire. It keeps the food in the top warm. During the day, this man sets up at a corner and caters

to coolies and rickshaw boys. At night he wanders about the little lanes, bellowing his menu and the benefits to be derived therefrom.

Of more dignity than portable restaurants are eating houses with permanent homes. These establishments sometimes are twenty feet square. Like European cafés they have extra tables in front.

During the summer the cooks work stripped to the waist. At mealtimes they use their spoons and ladles to beat a sharp tattoo upon the frying pan. Periodically they throw back their heads and yell how nice and cheap their food is.

The lower-class restaurants all specialize in a bomb-like biscuit stuffed with chopped meat and vegetables. The thing is cooked, but never enough to brown it. I handled one the other day and found it soft and heavy.

Besides the biscuit, another popular food is a string of dough like macaroni with sugar sprinkled on it. As the cook is preparing it, he whirls it through the air. He seldom drops it in the dust of the floor. He doesn't often step on it. After it's finally cooked it looks like a doughnut, if you would straighten one out.

Hot sweet potatoes, big fat ones, are eaten in great numbers.

Tea is sold at portable restaurants by children who carry two well-wrapped kettles and a dozen chipped and nicked cups.

A main course at a street restaurant consists of rice and noodles with vegetables and meat. The meat

frequently is camel. Intestines of pigs, served on a leaf of faded lettuce, are much in demand.

At the cheapest of these stands a coolie can have a satisfactory meal for five cents. For ten cents he can go from soup to nuts, with a flagon of wine on the side.

A Chinese gentleman would no more eat at a street restaurant than you would dine in a filthy cellar with a crowd of hoodlums. The gentleman visits eating halls as clean and, to some, as attractive as the best cafés of the West.

Chinamen use any excuse possible as reason for a dinner. On national and religious calendars are numerous feasts, yet each individual must supplement them with "welcome parties" and "farewell parties" and parties that admittedly are just plain parties.

Chinese tables are round and seat ten, never more than twelve.

The invitation ordinarily is sent out three days prior to the celebration, though it is not discourteous to deliver it only a few hours before the dinner is given.

The invitation is a long piece of red paper with the name of the honored guest at the top. Other names are listed below in the order of their social importance. This paper is circulated among those invited. The chief guest in accepting writes below his name: "I will respectfully take the last seat." The other guests merely signify an intention of being present, or they offer regrets.

Food is served in common dishes. Each person

reaches out with his chopsticks and helps himself. Sometimes the host sees a tidbit he thinks especially fine. He fishes it out and puts it on the plate of the guest he wishes to honor.

From the bowl to the individual plate there is a line of dripping. The bigger the line and the more grease about each plate, the more proof of full appreciation of the dinner.

Chinese feasts often have as many as forty courses. Each diner is supposed to sample every course placed upon the table.

Charges for a good dinner for ten persons are about fourteen dollars for the food and ten dollars for the wine. Besides this amount one is supposed to tip ten per cent. One tips not only the restaurant attendants, but the rickshaw boys and the chauffeurs of the guests. These gifts are called "rice-money"; they procure food for the servants while their masters are feasting. The expected tip is ten cents for the rickshaw boy, twenty cents for a groom, and forty cents for a chauffeur.

A Chinese feast breaks up with loud and unrestrained eructations, hiccoughs, and other audible evidences of repletion.

XXXI

I HAVE found that death in China is a ceremony, that burial is a ritual.

So soon as doctors pronounce the person dead, a diviner is called. This man, with the assistance of books and many instruments peculiar to his profession, determines at what day, hour and minute the spirit will leave the body. This spirit is a visible vapor and may be black, white or yellow.

At the time it is to depart, according to the announcement of the diviner, all members of the family leave the room where the body lies and go to a distant part of the house. This is to prevent seeing the vapor, a misfortune that brings bad luck and an early death to the beholder.

After the vapor has departed, the diviner informs the family of the most propitious time for the funeral ceremonies to be held. He names the exact spot where the body is to be buried. He tells the angle, according to the compass, at which the coffin is to be placed.

I talked with a Chinese gentleman who is a graduate of Yale in America and who has studied at Cambridge University, England. He told me that in two months' time he was going to the south of China to bury his mother. He remarked that the burial would be at

ten minutes past midnight. He said that the coffin would lie directly east and west.

"Why?" I asked.

"The family diviner," he answered, "has told us it must be so."

The speaker has a degree from a great American university and has studied for two years in England! Later he informed me the diviner had been very reasonable in his charges.

"Only two hundred dollars," he said.

The undertaker bathes a corpse in water obtained from a well near which firecrackers have been set off and various prayers recited. The front of the body is bathed seven times and the back eight times. After being embalmed it is dressed and placed in the coffin. Jewelry and ornaments are laid upon it. Gold leaf or a pearl or a bit of jade is put into the mouth. Sometimes a ball of red paper containing incense ash is inserted between the lips. The coffin is then sealed with a heavy varnish. Afterward it is delivered to the home of the deceased and there, constantly guarded by relatives, it lies in state throughout the period of mourning.

In China one of the greatest indications of filial respect is for a son to present his father with a coffin. This is done while the father is still alive and in good health. A Chinaman exhibits his coffin very much as a book collector shows a prized first edition. Some coffins are covered with a mass of writing which wishes the occupant "long life."

CHINESE FUNERAL

Upper left: gong beaters. Upper right: the procession. Center left: man throwing away "money." Center: Llama priests blowing ceremonial horns. Center right: an effigy intended to frighten away any evil spirit that might try to join the procession. Lower left: the catafalque. Lower right: Master of Ceremonies. He leads the procession and at the sound of his gong the long double column moves forward or halts.

The period of mourning is seven days, fourteen days, twenty-one, twenty-eight—some multiple of seven, the most popular being seven times seven. During these weeks the house of sorrow is never closed. Relatives and friends assemble about the coffin of the deceased. There food and drink are served. There, too, sometimes money is given away by the family of the dead person.

Greatest proof of goodness is for a Chinaman to afford his father a sumptuous funeral. Some men have spent their entire inheritance upon their father's funeral. There have been cases where sons have sold themselves into temporary or perpetual slavery that the parent might be buried with desirable pomp. There is a man in Peiping working to-day as a common laborer. His inheritance was fifty thousand dollars. He spent fifty-two thousand three hundred dollars for his father's funeral.

On the afternoon that ends the period of mourning, that is, the afternoon before the day of the funeral, the most prized possessions of the dead person are carried into an open field. There they are burned by the priests, one of whom taps the fire with a long pole to prevent evil spirits from coming to steal the sacrifices.

Such a burning is what the book says should take place. As a matter of fact it is never carried out. What actually happens is that paper images of different possessions are made and these images are burned. It

is not uncommon to see a conflagration of a paper boat, paper horse, or paper house.

On the morning of the funeral the relatives assemble and kowtow to the dead. Then the coffin is carried from the house. It is placed in the catafalque. The bearers then swing the poles of the catafalque to their shoulders and begin a rhythmic chant. The number of bearers is determined by the wealth of the deceased. Sometimes there are as many as eighty; usually there are sixty-four or thirty-two. Always the number is a multiple of eight.

When the procession advances it is composed of scores of filthy street boys, diseased old men and women—the human débris which only a Chinese city can produce. They all are members of the Beggars' Guild. Each is dressed in a brilliant green coat of cotton upon which are stamped vivid red and gold figures. The crown of the hat is low; the brim is wide, and the material resembles tar paper sprinkled with goat's hair. Each person carries a pole to which is affixed some insignia. It may be a golden spear, an enormous silken umbrella, a strip of paper on which is written praise of the dead. The human sweepings who form the procession are paid from five to ten cents for the six or seven hours they serve.

The column is sometimes three or four blocks long. At the sound of a gong the march is begun. At frequent intervals the procession stops. This is to allow all mourners, real and paid, to go to the side of the street and enjoy a cup of tea at stalls provided

by the family of the deceased. After this pleasantry, the gong sounds and the funeral goes on.

The sedan chair of the dead person is always borne before the catafalque. In it is placed the picture of the departed. The men mourners walk immediately after the chair; the eldest son holds aloft a three-tailed banner announcing the name of the deceased. One never sees any weeping. In fact, the higher class Chinamen laugh and the women titter. Weeping is bad form.

One of the most curious features of the funeral is the man who throws away money—except that it isn't money. This man carries circular pieces of paper with holes punched in the center. Ever so often he throws a handful into the air. The pieces separate and flutter down like great snowflakes. Thus is proved the generosity of the relatives of the dead.

In the procession are enormous paper images, later to be burned at the grave. There are as many bands as can be afforded. There are Lamas blowing horns fifteen feet long. There are other monks blowing horns which curve sharply upward. There are priests banging upon bells affixed to a board shaped like a lyre. The event is made an enjoyable spectacle, with entertainment and pleasure for all; it contrasts commendably with our Western barbarics where death is turned into a ghastly and unhallowed show.

At the gates of the city the police halt the procession to examine the permit of exit. One of the duties of the diviner was to determine the cause of death.

If he decides the death was a peaceful one, the authorities issue a warrant and the body may be carried outside the city wall. But if the diviner declares there has been violence, the police seize the body and begin their investigations.

Whenever a suicide takes place, the diviner is confronted with a great task. He must determine whether the self-destruction was brought about entirely by the will of the suicide, or was prompted or inspired by the action of some other person. If he announces that Miss Soumay Hoo committed suicide because she was walking along the street and fell in love with Mr. Tchung-Tchou then the relatives of Soumay promptly bring suit against Tchung-Tchou. During the time of the suit the police will not allow the body of Soumay to be taken from the city.

The fact that a funeral has been held is no indication that the burying is to follow immediately. A funeral signifies only that the period of intensive mourning is ended, that the coffin is being taken from the home to a temple—a temple, perhaps, in some distant part of China. A custom of the Chinese requires that the body be carried for burial to the province where the person was born.

As the corpse is borne along, a cock rides in a coop upon the coffin. Ever so often the cock crows. Otherwise the soul might get lost.

After the body is placed in a temple in its native province it is kept for a period of weeks, months or years. This time is determined by the diviner, who

usually names a term best suited to the purse of the family.

Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the hero of modern China, died in 1925. Four years later they interred him.

. . .

I'm writing this from Shanghai—and I don't like the place. It's as Chinese as Broadway.

Shanghai, undoubtedly, is one of the most important trade centers in the world, but it holds almost no interest for the traveler. Foreigners own the town, having leased the land from the Chinese, and, except in the native city, a visitor might as well be in St. Louis or Edinburgh. The Bund in Shanghai is very like The Strand in London, and Nanking Road is merely a continuation of Market Street. It's all rather disappointing.

. . .

During summer months foreigners in China do not wear the ordinary dinner jacket.

They dress for the evening in customary black trousers, stiff shirt, collar and tie, but in a jacket of white duck, cut to fit tight, like the bob-tail jacket of a bell boy.

At first it looks unsightly, and in it one feels somewhat shy about public appearance.

. . .

One of the most popular of all street entertainments is the peep show.

The price charged is about one-third of a penny. A few days ago I was host to half a dozen boys and girls. We took turns peering at the sights within. First a waterfall was shown. Then an execution was vividly depicted. An ancient battle was portrayed. The best picture of the lot was of a giant who had pulled a man in half and held aloft the dripping fragments. My youthful guests demanded an encore on that one.

When I turned from the show the passage was blocked. The Chinese in friendly curiosity have no hesitancy in stopping to look at a foreigner. Once you are off the tourist highway you are an object of considerable interest. Men, women and children peer at you. The idea of a grown foreigner patronizing a peep show seemed to please them mightily. They grinned and laughed in characteristic good nature.

* * *

Often in Chinese cities one sees men with two walnuts in the right hand. These nuts are ceaselessly rubbed against each other. It's an old Manchu custom. The members of the ruling class never worked with the hands. Since great dexterity is needed when eating with chopsticks or when writing Chinese characters, a nimbleness of fingers being particularly necessary, the Manchus constantly played with walnuts to prevent the fingers becoming stiff.

* * *

The outside of a Chinese pawnshop causes one to

think of Gibraltar, Port Arthur or some other famous stronghold. The windows are barred with iron. The doors are studded with iron. Great stones are balanced upon the roof ready to be toppled down on robbers.

• • •

Polygamy in China is illegal. The law recognizes only the legal, the Number One, wife. So much for the law. The fact is that polygamy obtains in China almost as often as there are men with sufficient wealth to afford it.

The Chinese cite half a dozen reasons for its existence.

A Chinaman's wedding is arranged for him by his parents. Often the groom first sees his bride on the day of the ceremony. Since divorce is almost impossible, it's only fair, say the Chinese, that a man should have some recourse against such a pig-in-a-poke system.

An even more important reason is that every Chinaman must have a male heir. Else who would see that the ancestors are worshiped? Who would assure the rites essential to the eternal rest of the father and the father's father? A wife's failure to deliver a son almost forces a man into a semi-legal relation with another woman.

Some men take their concubines into the homes of their wives. Under such an arrangement all children are legitimate. Legally they are the offspring of "The Big Mother," the Number One wife.

• • •

If the betrothed of a Chinese girl dies before the wedding, she goes through the ceremony alone; then she enters the home of her parents-in-law as a widow.

Somewhat similar are the posthumous weddings. If a son dies unmarried, his parents search for a family of proper rank in which an unmarried girl has died.

The dead boy and girl are married at a regular ceremony. Stone tablets are substituted for the principals. Afterward, the coffin containing the body of the "bride" is brought to the coffin containing the body of the "groom." For a time they are left unwatched and unguarded. Then the two coffins are buried side by side. So the wedded pair enter eternity.

XXXII

ANNETTE, dearest, I've been in Shanghai for two weeks. I've found the place crowded with cabarets. In them one sees dancing partners from every nation of the world. Last night I met a girl whose home is in northern Siberia.

Her hair, as I remember, was the color of a tired afternoon sun coming back from the golden leaves of autumn. Her blue eyes were very, very trusting.

The orchestra, a muted violin leading, was playing a slow fox-trot.

"And what's your name?"

"Name? . . . Name Natasha."

"Natasha. It's a pretty name."

"You zink so?"

"Yes, of course."

A saxophone in soft measures stole the lead from the violin and murmured the melody in pleading, tender notes.

"Telephone you. You come take walk wiz me? Yes?"

"Perhaps."

"Take walk in park?"

"Perhaps."

The Chinese, Annette, are the most ardent bird-lovers in the world. They make companions of birds.

Some birds are owned for their songs, some for their tricks: the cormorant because he's a successful fisher, and falcons and hawks because of their abilities as hunters.

Cormorant fishing is a profession and not a sport. At night little fishing crafts, with flares burning at their prows, drift along the river. Periodically the owner lets his birds down into the water. Each cormorant wears a collar loose enough to permit breathing, but tight enough to prevent complete swallowing. The bird glides swiftly until he sees a fish, then he dives, outswims his prey and gulps him into the capacious pouch. Once the pouch is fully distended, the fisherman pulls the cord, the bird returns to the boat, disgorges, and then is put back into the water once more.

Falconry in olden days was one of the most popular of all sports. Marco Polo relates how one emperor entered the field with seventy thousand huntsmen. It is still followed by the Chinese. The falcons, some of them valued at a hundred dollars, are trained to kill birds smaller than themselves and to catch rabbits. In Mongolia the more hearty huntsmen follow the chase with the golden eagle, a fierce bird, strong and swift, capable of destroying a deer.

The falcons in Peiping are so numerous that for years they have troubled the owners of tame pigeons and doves. The more gentle birds formerly dared not go into the sky. They feared being beaten down

by falcons and killed. For that reason the bird-lovers developed a device for the guarding of their pets.

Bamboo is light as cork and from it whistles are made. Some of them are round and large as apples. Others are composed of five or six tiny pipes, graduated and fastened together. One of these whistles is attached by a stout cord to the rump of a pigeon. Three or four pigeons are thus equipped, then released. The other pigeons are allowed to join them. The soft music of the whistles frightens the falcons and no bird is ever attacked when the flock is so protected.

Many mornings in Peiping I've lain warm beneath the blankets listening to a flock of pigeons flying back and forth, back and forth, their soft elusive diapason drifting down gently from the sky. 'Tis a most pleasant half-awakening.

Whenever a Chinaman recovers from an illness he goes to the bird market, buys a bird and liberates it. This is a prayer and a thanksgiving.

In Peiping for a while I was a little ill. After I was well again Wu demanded I go to the bird market. When I hesitated he became wildly excited. He predicted terrible happenings if I didn't give the customary thanks offering. So I went with him. At the market I bought a cage of rice sparrows. Feeling very much like Leonardo, I opened the door—and experienced a new thrill when the cage jumped-jumped-jumped in my hand as each bird leapt upward and hurled his little body through the opening.

A common sight in China is a man holding a forked stick upon which is perched a bird with a cord fastened around its neck. These birds are not songsters but are trained in tricks. The owners are proud of them and boast of their abilities. On special occasions they are happy to display the cleverness of their pets.

When a man is ready for a performance he releases the cord. The bird stretches his wings and gives himself a vigorous shake. First the master throws a tiny ball into the air. The bird catches it, returns it, and receives a reward of one seed. Then two balls are thrown into the air, one after the other; the bird catches them both. He comes back and gets two seeds. Once I saw a bird catch three balls, all of them being in the air at once and thrown only a few feet higher than the man's head.

Sometimes the owner hangs up a small box about the size of a circular mousetrap. From a hole in the bottom protrudes a bit of red cloth. When the bird is freed he darts forward and jerks out the cloth with his bill. This releases the sides of the box and they fly upward to expose flags of different nations. The bird takes the cloth to his master and gets a seed. He then removes the flags one at a time and carries them to his owner. Unfailingly he waits until he has received his reward.

Men who own these trick birds have daily meetings. They exhibit their pets, praise their own and decry those of their companions.

It's always a pleasure to see a Chinaman give his

bird a bath. The man fills his mouth with water, inflates his cheeks, draws them in suddenly, and blows a gust upon the waiting bird.

I have a delightful Chinese friend of about thirty-five years of age who is an office boy for a foreign shipping company. I met him one afternoon when he helped me direct a rickshaw coolie. Later, in a tea house, he confessed his hobby.

"Some men play opium. Some play girls. I play birds."

I ask you, *chérie!* A man who forgoes opium and girls in order "to play birds." I made every overture. Slowly our friendship grew. It was sealed when he invited me to hear a bird concert. He explained that each morning he rose at five o'clock. With his lark he went to the tea house where the birdmen assemble. He asked me to go with him.

The next morning when he arrived at my home, his bird silent within a cage covered by a blue hood, I was waiting. In the murk of the early morning we set off together. Along narrow lanes we passed until we came into a larger street.

Soon we met another man. He, too, was swinging a bird cage before him. He and my friend exchanged greetings and I was introduced. A third lover of birds appeared and joined us. Two others approached from a side lane. As we went forward we saw still other men, gently swinging their bird cages and moving toward the tea house. They called greetings to each other.

We walked down a narrow strip of dust, the stone walls rising high and blank on either side. We crossed a brick courtyard. We went into a gray tunnel that led us to a room.

The room was about twenty feet by thirty. The floor was of earth, trampled to a granite hardness. The walls were brick. Wooden tracery jutted down from the corners of the four alcoves. The ceiling showed its heavy unpainted rafters. The place was dingy with the slow accumulation of years. Spider webs hung from the rafters. Dust showed gray upon the nicked and broken tracery. The four narrow windows were coated thick with dirt and grease, yet thousands of fly specks showed through them.

In the center of the room was a rectangular mound of brick. Upon it a charcoal fire gave heat and light. Six black kettles sang through crooked little throats. An old man in faded blue rags tended the fire and kettles. When he moved, his left leg twisted beneath him. He held his hand on his thigh.

Placed around the walls were eighteen small tables. They had once been red—before dust and grime toned their color. Narrow benches without backs were on two sides of each table. Upon the benches sat forty or fifty men. They sipped tea from cracked cups without handles. Upon every table were placed hooded bird-cages. The dim light of early morning failed to penetrate the dark windows. The sole illumination was from the charcoal fire. It lit up the yellow faces of the men until they shone like copper masks. The

air was close and hot and there was the stench of cheap tobacco.

As I entered, a quick murmur passed around: "Wygolin! Wygolin!" they said.

My friend introduced me to his acquaintances. The cripple dragged himself to us and served us tea. We sat and smoked and stared at each other. Ever so often a Chinaman would smile and nod his head. Occasionally one would speak to me, shoving his face close to mine as he did. My friend would interpret.

At rare intervals a sound would come from beneath one of the hoods. A quick hand would tap the top of the cage and there would be silence. We drank more tea. We smoked more cigarettes. The sun came through the mists of the morning. Softly it struck the gloomy panes of the windows. The men in the room sat more erect. Frequently they glanced about them.

And then a golden arrow was shot through a hole in a window. It buried its head in the earthen floor. A quivering, golden gossamer marked its path. It was the signal.

"Now bird sing," said my friend. "You hear very good bird sing."

An old man beside me, a man with a face like wrinkled leather, drew a cage lovingly toward him. He lifted the cover. Inside, a lark hopped upon a sand floor as clean as the top of a lady's dressing table. On one side of the cage was a tiny vat for food. On the other side was a vat for water. In the center

stood a circular platform slightly larger than a silver dollar.

The old man picked up a slender stick of wood, shaped like a baton—a baton belonging to the director of some great orchestra. He rapped upon the edge of the table. The lark flicked his head to one side and peered out. The man rapped again. The lark blinked once, twice, and hopped upon the dais.

The room was silent as if Jenny Lind were coming back from the grave. Patti never received more prayerful attention.

The man rapped again. The lark ruffled his breast. The man rapped again. The lark swelled his little body—the room was no longer four walls of dirt enclosing a cube of unpleasant air. I, with those about me, was out in the open field hailing the blithe spirit that poured forth its melody at heaven's gate.

I was told by my host that each bird sang thirteen songs, sang them in rotation and never varied. Whenever a young bird is bought he is taken directly to the tea house. There each morning he listens to the old birds. From them he learns the thirteen songs, which, throughout his life, he is permitted to sing—thirteen, and no more.

No one knows where or why the particular thirteen songs were decreed, but they were—and the course of the stars is not more immutable. A slight variation causes the master to rap the singer upon the leg. A repetition of the error, and he raps the bird upon the bill. My friend told me that a singer who knew the

thirteen songs correctly would sell for thirty or forty dollars.

"But suppose he knows fourteen songs?" I suggested. "That's better than thirteen."

"Oh," sneered my friend, "he might sell for ten or fifteen cents—that is, if anybody would buy him."

The worst of all crimes is for a lark to imitate a crow. A broken neck is the least punishment awarded such an ornithological offense. My friend, his eyes staring, recounted breathlessly how on one morning a singer in the tea house actually imitated a crow. He explained that the other owners caught up their birds and fled.

"Such bad examples might forever ruin all other birds. Forever," he repeated in horror.

When a singer has completed his program, the owner takes a bamboo tube from his pocket, draws out the bit of cotton stuffed in the end, taps the tube against the top of the table, picks up the grub-worm which falls out and rewards the bird.

"Make strong," my friend explained. "Then can sing big."

After the bird has been fed, the owner places the cover over the cage, lights his pipe and leans back, at infinite peace with God and himself. Respectfully he awaits the next little performer to mount his dais.

* * *

You know, my best beloved, it seems as if I shall never get home. I've been away almost ten months.

When I left I planned to be back by this time, to have gone all round the world. But I couldn't make it. Distances in the Orient are too great. There is too much to see and do. Besides, I can't hear Chinese larks sing thirteen songs every morning. Why hurry away and leave them?

But I ought to go on. I know that. So I'm leaving Shanghai to-morrow at noon. I'm sailing for Hongkong. From there I shall go to Canton, where sixteen famous pirates are to be beheaded. There has been considerable talk about their execution and I think I'd like to see it. I may or may not write you about it.

After Canton, I shall return to Hongkong. There I'll take ship for Saigon, in French Indo-China. From Saigon I'll go into Cambodia and to Angkor—I'm eager to see Angkor, that mysterious city at which the jungle has clutched until weeds grow in the throne rooms of ancient kings, and the roots of trees have split the heads of mighty idols.

After Angkor, then Siam. Down through Malay, Java and the Islands. Back to Burma. India. And, after that, the Moon.

But I'll make a confession, dearest. The true reason I'm hurrying to Hongkong is that there are some Chinese gambling houses there. I'm going to Hongkong to recoup the money I've been spending. My finances are getting low, but I'm worried no longer. If I can't win from Chinamen—pardon me a second.

"Yes."

"Talkee telephone, master?"

"Yes, boy."

"Hello."

"'Ello. It is I—Natasha."

"Oh, hello, Natasha. How are you?"

"Verra well. *Que fais tu?*"

"I'm writing a letter."

"You no come take walk in park? No?"

"I'm afraid not. I really should finish my letter."

"The sun shine verra, verra bright."

"I know, Natasha, but I must finish my letter. Truly I must. I'm sorry."

"*Da.* I sorrow, too. Au revoir."

"Good-by, Natasha."

As I was saying, these Chinamen won't catch on to the fast game I'll play; at least, not quickly enough to stop me from winning. Before they open their sleepy eyes I'll be on my way stuffing bills into my pockets.

It may be some time before you hear from me again—but you will. I'll write you about the mysterious jungle city of Angkor. I'll write you about Siam and Java and Bali and Burma and India and all the weird places. I'll write you about ivory, apes and peacocks. I'll write you about—

You know, come to think of it, *chérie,* the sun *is* shining verra, verra bright. I can't help believing a walk in the park would do me good. You won't mind? No?

And I promise to send you a ring of jade, carved like the head of Moloch. If you listen carefully you

can hear the thin green lips murmur an ancient mystery that is the Orient.

I'll buy it with part of the money I shall win in Hongkong. I'm going there to-morrow with one thousand dollars. I'm going there to bankrupt the Chinese gamblers.

XXXIII

CHILDERS,
BIRMINGHAM
ALABAMA.

DEAR DAD: AM IN HONGKONG STOP HAVE BEEN HERE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS STOP HAVE EIGHTEEN CENTS STOP WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

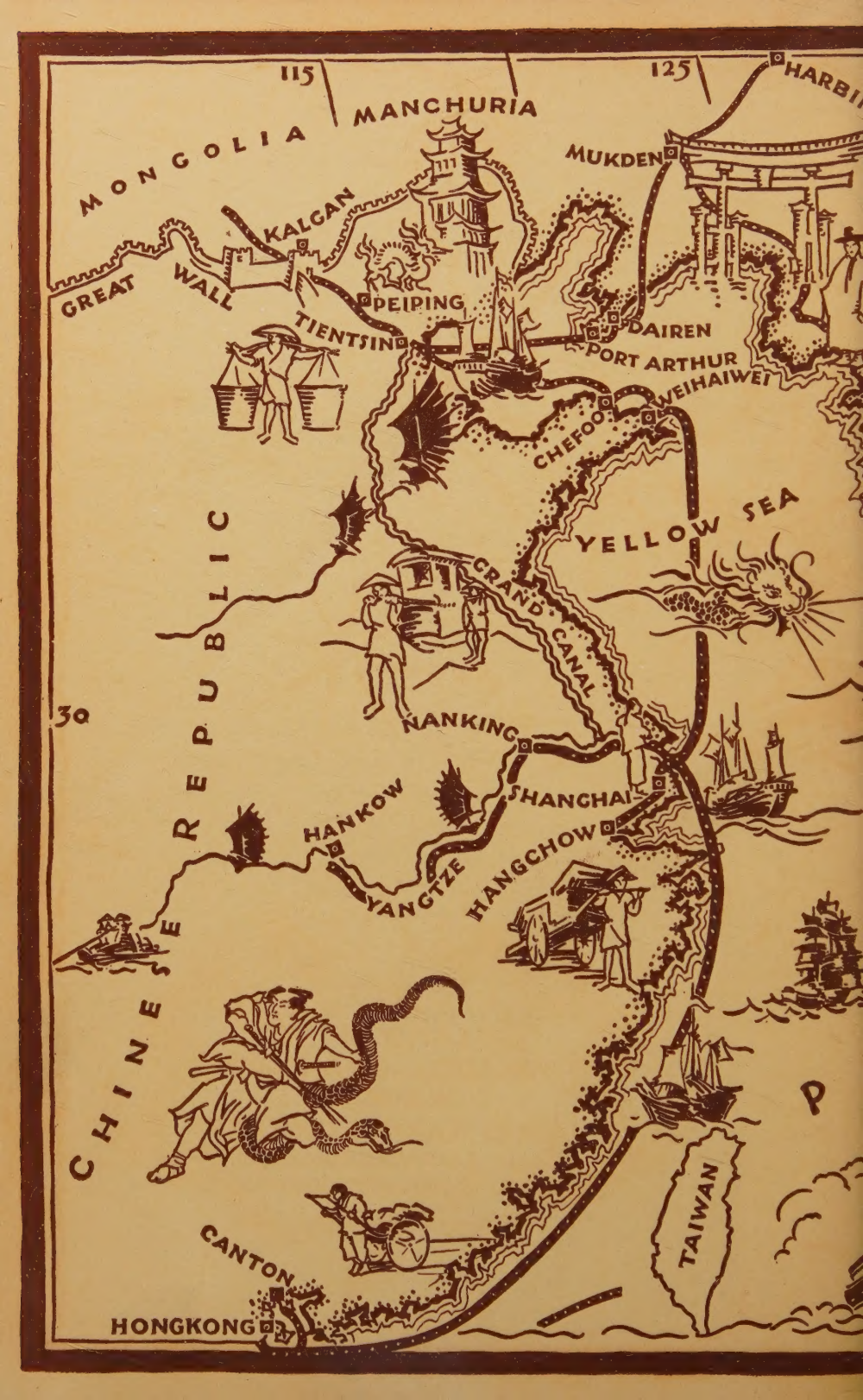
JIM

CHILDERS,
AMERICAN EXPRESS,
HONGKONG,
CHINA.

AM CABLING HONGKONG SUFFICIENT MONEY TO GET YOU TO SAIGON IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA STOP AM CABLING SAIGON SUFFICIENT MONEY TO GET YOU AROUND THE REST OF THE WORLD STOP SUGGEST THAT IN FUTURE YOU CONFINE YOUR ACTIVITIES TO SIGHTSEEING

DAD

THE END


115
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HARBI
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DAIREN
PORT ARTHUR
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CHEFOO
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GRAND CANAL
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NANKING
SHANGHAI
HANKOW
HANGCHOW
YANGTZE
TAIWAN
CANTON
HONGKONG

135
145
Esther M. Mattsson
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KYOTO
TOKYO
YOKOHAMA
KOBE
OSAKA
SHIMONOSEKI
EMPIRE OF JAPAN
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25
LAND OF
MIKADO AND MANDARIN
WHEREIN
JAMES SAXON CHILDERS
VOYAGED AND
ADVENTURED
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